

S E R M O N S

ON THE FOLLOWING

S U B J E C T S.

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| <p>I. All the works of God, in their natural state, beautiful and lovely, &c.</p> <p>II. To be filled with the fulness of God, explained and illustrated.</p> <p>III. The necessity of giving the heart to wisdom, the power the mind has over its affections, &c.</p> <p>IV. The great similarity of the individuals in the constituent and most valuable parts of human nature.</p> <p>V. & VI. Moral perfection, the highest end and chief good of man, attainable by all; and the means of attaining it.</p> <p>VII. What is imported in glorifying God, and in what sense to be the end of our actions.</p> | <p>VIII. The scripture doctrine of the mediation of Christ explained.</p> <p>IX. What the sentiments of angels concerning our present state may be supposed to be.</p> <p>X. The cares of human life, how far they shall cease in a future state.</p> <p>XI. That the present state has a plain reference to a future invisible one.</p> <p>XII. The infinite importance of the love of God.</p> <p>XIII. The great importance of not being enslaved by any desire.</p> <p>XIV. & XV. Our absolute dependence on God; with practical reflections.</p> <p>XVI. What is imported in keeping the heart, and the best means of doing it.</p> |
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By the late Reverend JAMES DUCHAL, D. D.

V O L. II.

32d

To which is prefixed,
An ESSAY on the CHARACTER of the AUTHOR.

L O N D O N :

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LETTER

TO A

FRIEND, &c.

—*Quique sacerdotes casti, dum vita manebat,*—

I DO not, my friend, call into question the general utility of biographical writing: On the contrary, eminent and exemplary virtue displayed in its true colours, by a masterly hand, one would think should be uncommonly entertaining, as well as tend to produce many good effects. Much less do I object to the original, of which you desire a copy: It is also one which I had access to know intimately, and held in the highest esteem;

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so that no man would be more warmly zealous to do honour to the memory of our late friend Dr. *Duchal*, did power always follow inclination. However, several other difficulties occur, in such an attempt; some of which, perhaps, may not improperly find a place, in the entrance of this letter, which I do not yet foresee can run into any great length; but even should it happen to equal the extent of a moderate sermon, still it will fall short of many modern epistles, to a friend, and through him, to the public. Possibly too, some hints may be thrown out, not unuseful to other unpractised adventurers in this way of writing, (or, it may be, as your friend, pressed into the service) who might otherwise, in circumstances like the present, not find it easy to spread out scanty matter, without any continued thread of narration to work along.

It were indeed to be wished that a fair hearing could be procured for obscure and humble worth; where more is meant than commonly meets the ear, and eye: But it is no easy matter to bring out to light the hidden graces of the heart; even the lines of a fine and delicate face are not easily
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hit off. Simplicity of manners, disciplin'd passions, moving in a sort of still life, and in a narrow sphere, are not glaring enough to attract the popular eye. As few have the powers to express, perhaps, not many have taste to discern the mild and retired beauties. Yet the humble virtues are most truly such; they are most useful in common life; all are called to the practice of them; and they are most imitable: Few are born to figure on the public stage; and it is often seen that rude undisciplin'd abilities, and passions, most strongly rouse attention; for nature's shoots are most luxuriant. Such characters are generally struck off at a heat, from the collision of strong powers, and fortunate conjunctures: And, at best, mere elevation of place, boldness of spirit, and force of genius, produce themselves into light, rather as objects of undiscerning applause, than of imitation. Indeed, characters of this cast often produce a very bad effect: the moral eye is dazzled by the false lustre of specious qualities; not to say, by flagrant enormities, dressed out in the spoils of virtue; thus debauching the sense of right, and prostituting the rewards of true worth,

to the service of vice—*Decipit exemplar vitii imitabile*: And thus, modest retired virtue, in the vale of life, is still more obscured, by the splendor of folly in high place. Such virtue may indeed resemble the dawning light, which shines more and more to the fullness of day; but from those whose senses are not exercised to discern, it will attract little regard; shedding only a mild and gentle ray, amidst the shades of obscurity. The shewy, the superficial, the glaring, have always, and still will draw the many to wonder: In truth, many are the misshapen and mischievous beasts, the world has wondered after; while the plain, the solid, the natural, lye little noticed. For these fame seldom sounds her trumpet: However, she is too puissant a personage to be arrested in her course by us: Common fame sounds, and common sense is silent: And, in the present state of things, there may possibly be more reasons for this, than our philosophy wots of.

Now, my friend, in so hopeless a case, were it not the wiser way, to let every man's own works praise him? If, for instance, his friends produce him as a writer;

ter; why, let the impartial public reward him, according to such his works. What need of suspected panegyric? and not unjustly suspected, in modern practice; for what happens? An admired friend is no more; when, instantly, fond affection snatches up the pencil, and all is one blaze of light, with scarce a shade, or variety of lines, to give distinction. But surely, thus to mix up almost all the virtues, and in the highest degree, with scarce one trace of defect, or human infirmity, is neither to draw, nor colour after the life. This is not to give the portrait of a man, but the poet's *perfect monster, which the world ne'er saw*;—or, on the contrary, if malevolence conduct the work, the roman satirist's still more enormous monster, *redeemed from vice by no one virtue*. Credulity itself will revolt at such outrage against all truth of character; as beyond the powers of humanity, either to exemplify, or to imitate. Doubt will either question the existence of the perfect pattern; or, looking up to such sublime highths of virtue, will strain the powers; and despair of attainment will extinguish all ardour of imitation.

There appears to be a natural tone of the powers, beyond which the pursuit of virtue itself, may incur the imputation of folly. For truth's sake then, and for example's sake, it were better not set the mark to be aimed at, too far out of reach. It seems safer for each person, without violent efforts, to hold on the even tenour of his own way ; in the poet's manner, addressing his fellow-candidates—*Quod si cessas, aut strenuus anteis, nec tardum operior, nec præcedentibus insto.*

But it may be said, what should discourage, or rather not provoke emulation, in a life of easy, modest, unaffected goodness ; and acting in an humble private station ? Should not parity of circumstances, and apparently equal advantages, with those who, by a patient continuance in well-doing, have already finished their course, naturally stimulate others, to strain every nerve in the race of virtue ? more especially, as the same immortal wreath of glory shall crown equal ardour, and perseverance, though with unequal powers. Be it so : Still here is the difficulty, like our late friend, to hold on this same unremitting tenour of virtue, steadfast to the end

end—unseduced, like him, by the allurements of sight and sense ; by temptations from within, and from without ; by the current of fashion and example ; unswayed by popular opinion, and the false maxims of the many ; unterrified too, to encounter difficulties, dangers, pains, losses, and even obloquy and reproach, in support of the cause of truth and goodness—unseen, unapplauded, unreluctant, to submit to severe trials of virtue, of self-discipline, and self-denial, for the testimony of a good conscience, and the approbation of the supreme Judge of merit ! No doubt, an approving heart, and the attestation of him who is greater than the heart, is the noblest reward of virtue, far beyond the acclaim of men and angels : But, is it easy thus not to consult with flesh and blood ; with unwearied patience to continue steadfast and immovable ; to live not by sight, but by faith ? Is not this true heroism, in whatever condition of life ? Does it not approach to the summit of christian perfection ? It surely supposes the fullest conviction of all the leading principles of religion ; the warmest

attachment of heart to them ; and an invincible firmness of spirit. Such is the hidden man of the heart ; such is modest retired worth ! Besides, such worth is often associated with a state of life, with circumstances, which depress and obscure it ; it naturally courts retirement ; careless, perhaps impatient of applause. Why then obtrude it on the public eye ; or draw it into the common haunts of men ?—of men, either lost in a whirl of vanity, or engross'd by the more specious pursuits of life ?

Such however, it must yet be owned, is the force of genuine goodness, that, where there is any sensibility remaining, any thing unison to it, in the mind of the observer, it will command respect. Even the retainers to vice, if not quite lost to the ingenuous sentiments of nature, do homage to it. Let but the living form of undissembled goodness arrest the attention of the gay, the dissipated, the pleasurable ; and they will, for the time, revere it : Surely, a very unexceptionable testimony in its favour. After all, whatever declaimers may suggest of times and manners, they are not yet so degenerate,

degenerate, as that true wisdom need shun all the resorts of men, or fear an ill reception. Of this our friend was a remarkable instance; whose modest unassuming worth attracted the esteem of persons of rank, and figure in life; a distinction which did no less honour to those who conferred, than to him who received it. How is it then, that those who should stand foremost in the train of virtue, are so much banished from the commerce of the fashionable world? On the one hand, grimace, and an illiberal forbidding manner, has belied the fair form of virtue: On the other, levity, and an unresisting suppleness, which may be molded into any shape, is an extreme, perhaps, of worse consequence to religion; as it approaches to libertinism; is more exposed to view; and in characters set up as examples to others. Be both these extremes avoided; let virtue assume her own native form, her easy graceful dignity of manner; and all will be well. But of this, perhaps, something too much; as it may not be thought a text fit for lay-handling.

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It is in itself, and to my purpose, far more agreeable, to contemplate our late friend, as a fair pattern of the golden mean above-mentioned. And I shall be much pleased to find you, and other judges in this moral painting, who knew the original, recognizing the resemblance, though but imperfect, between it and this unfinished sketch—How sweetly united in him, the soft, the gentle, the sympathetic; with the firm, the grave, and the manly? and sure it is no mean point of wisdom, to harmonize these often jarring elements. To win ones way to the heart, for honest purposes; by mild address and the arts of persuasion, hiding the authority of the adviser, in the kind remonstrances of the friend, was eminently his talent. Indeed his natural modesty and reserve, perhaps to an excess, seldom assumed the severity of rebuke, unless extorted in vindication of truth and right; when he never failed to exert himself—*Virtutis veræ custos rigidusque satelles*; incapable, from cowardise, or mean views, to desert the post of virtue; or, where the still voice of reason could be heard,
of

of adding even the sanction of silence, to what he thought was wrong.

Particular characters appear eminently distinguished, by particular virtues and talents: the condition of human life requires it so. Natural complexion, habit, education, profession, many complicated circumstances, bring out, with various degrees of strength, the various powers of head and heart: through all these, the original cast of genius will predominate: however ductile to proper culture, and capable of assuming various forms, still the ruling principle will strongly mark the general character. See how endlessly the human face is diversified, by the combination of a few simple elements! while, in a general sameness, some prominent striking turn of feature, stamps the peculiar character of countenance. Now, it is the seizing this characteristic distinctive mark, and producing it to light, which reflects the true image of the individual: This omitted, or unskilfully taken off, the particular man is lost, in the vague resemblance of the species at large. However, this individuating principle itself, is not
always

always obvious: it may not be called out by any corresponding scene of action; it may go on to operate uniformly, through a still recurring sameness of life; like an equable motion proceeding from the same continued impulse: This is often the case in a private station; where the same offices proceed in the same tenour; and yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow, are of the same colour. The whole piece may be excellent: the character, so situated, may exemplify the most useful, the most amiable virtues; the virtues of the good citizen, of the faithful friend, of the eminently pious, diligent, and skilful teacher of religion.

How applicable is all this to the author of the following discourses? How intirely devoted, his life, to the zealous discharge of the duties of his profession, those who knew him best can witness--- The whole man, his soul, his heart, was in his business, as a minister of the christian religion! Warm and unbiaffed in his attachment to the cause of truth, and liberty; to promote these was devoted a spirit of research, manly and liberal; and
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which, no very common appearance perhaps, grew with his growing years. He was utterly averse from that imperious, narrow, bigotted spirit, which has wrought such mighty mischief in the christian world; to the reproach of religion itself; and which one knows not whether it has more debased the understanding, or corrupted the principles and affections of the human heart. It was from a deep conviction of the great truths of religion, a conviction, the result of most impartial inquiry; from the powers of Christianity strongly felt; from a heart penetrated with a sense of duty in discharging the offices of the sacred function, and the honour of approving his zeal and fidelity to his Lord and Master---From these, was his conduct animated to such unwearied diligence; hence was he instant in season, out of season, fervent in spirit, serving his God.

Indeed, *an indefatigable industry* appears to have been a peculiar distinction of this excellent man; and a most important distinction it is! For it will be found, that in the various offices of life, we fall short,
not

not so much for want of talents, as from indolence and want of activity. We readily seem to yield the pre-eminence, in point of ability, to the person who far excels us, in moral and religious attainments; little perhaps suspecting, that our sloth and want of exertion, are then obliquely making their own apology. You know it was an essential article in the character of an eminent Roman, that he was, *vir industrius*, an industrious man: And I am persuaded it will be found, that superior eminence is oftener the fruit of this plain virtue, than of superior abilities. However, successful industry supposes the powers, and energy of mind, properly pointed to the course of life; as well as unbiassed, and unobstructed, by the counterworking of opposite forces—Hence the apostolic precept, of laying aside every weight, and the sin that most easily besets us.

But, in proof of our friend's most exemplary industry, a point highly deserving particular notice, as in a great measure imitable by all, and productive of the best effects; let it be considered, that after a vigorous application, in early youth, to fit himself for that reputable course

course of life he had chosen; and after having made honourable progress in it, acquitting himself of all its duties, with most conscientious zeal---at the same time, by diligent study, and a singular patience of labour, which is a capital point, having laid up not only an uncommon stock of useful knowledge and learning; but, which is a more immediate necessary of theological life, of sermons also; one may say, more than sufficient to have equipped most modern Divines for life---Yet, all this notwithstanding, on being chosen to succeed the late Mr. *Abernethy*, in the protestant dissenting congregation of *Wood-street, Dublin*;* though now past the meridian of life, of a valetudinary habit of body, and in circumstances which, from change of place, might have tempted the love of ease to abate the ardor of application---He, on the contrary, began, as it were, his career anew; not availing himself of the rich treasure before laid up, in the way of writing; but forgetting, as *St. Paul* speaks,

* On Mr. *Abernethy's* removal from *Antrim*, our author also had succeeded him in that place; where the memory of both will be long and deservedly revered.

speaks, the things that were behind, he also pressed forward for the prize that awaits a patient continuance in well-doing: Infomuch that, amidst daily avocations, during a course of twenty years, which he survived from his first settlement in *Dublin*, he composed and wrote sermons, to an amount almost beyond belief; perhaps scarcely to be parallell'd; more, it appears on the best computation, than seven hundred. So striking an instance, so late in life, of renewed, one may say, of obstinate labour, is surely worth recording. It will doubtless, be matter of wonder to many; and to some, it is to be hoped, of generous emulation. His manner also of composing sermons, deserves notice; perhaps the imitation of all, not incapable of it, who would wish to strengthen memory by vigorous exercise; and to acquire a contemplative habit. By continued practice, the Doctor had arrived at a facility of digesting, and laying up in his mind, the whole of a discourse: infomuch that he not unfrequently transferred it upon paper, unless broke in upon, at one sitting, without hesitation, and with more than
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the rapidity of almost any mere transcriber. His thoughtful turn of mind, and his parsimony of time, probably led him into this track: certain it is, he much, but modestly, recommended the practice, from his own experience. Whether one is master of his time, or even otherwise, still a much greater portion of it daily runs to waste, than can well be apprehended, without entering into a detail of particulars. These pretious moments are generally dissipated, without regret, in the supposed necessary gratifications, or amusements, of life: not to reckon the greater sacrifices of time, made to indolence, or to impertinent activity; for which, perhaps, we charge ourselves as criminal. The accustomed daily round which fills up life, at the time easily justifies itself; and it is only on bringing longer periods to a fair account, that we become properly sensible of the mighty blank spaces, and of the irreparable loss incurred. Here, as in many other things, our friend's conduct was most worthy of imitation. It was his frugality of time, his redeeming every passing moment almost,

which enabled him to crowd so much work, into so short a period. Perhaps no man had less reason, in any sense, to say with the roman Emperor, *My friends, I have lost a day!*

I just mentioned above, the Doctor's frequent avocations in the way of his profession. In truth, wherever the distressed, the disconsolate, the necessitous, the sick, demanded his presence, there was he. In such offices of mercy and humanity, he surely laboured more abundantly than you all. Beside the occasions of ministering relief, which his compassionate heart sought out, multitudes of all sorts, as well as those under his immediate care, applied to him; for, without partial regards himself, he was loved by all; and suffering of any sort, which he could any way alleviate, was to him an irresistible call---Was any hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and he did not minister relief, when in his power? All this was, in him, the more meritorious, as it broke in upon his natural love of retirement, of reading, of writing; which he not only gave

gave up to the social active duties of life; but, indeed, his ease, his health: He was much in the wretched habitations of poverty and disease. At all times, regardless of the inclemency of season, and the obstruction of crowded streets, he went about doing good. No man ever reduced to practice more thoroughly the Philosopher's just decision, that where the calls of public or private virtue clash with learned ease, and retirement, the latter should be instantly abandoned: But, how difficult this piece of self-denial, common practice abundantly shews!

Here, no doubt, it is very obvious to say, whence had this man leisure to produce so much in the way of writing*; and, to say the least, far above the common standard? The fact however is certainly so. Nor can indolence, and dissipation, easily conceive what may be achieved by strong powers, by habits of industry, and patience of labour; stimulated by motives of duty, and unobstructed by the cares and pleasures of life.—The Doctor had no
a 2 family,

* He was also the author of various occasional publications, both here and in *England*.

family. To say the truth, his practice might well have reminded one of the roman Poet's humorous apology, for the tardiness of his poetical productions, taken from the bustle and interruptions of a town-life, and from the jostling of busy crowds; on which he exclaims, with his usual vein of pleasantry---*I nunc, & versus tecum meditare canoros!* Now, in this very situation of traversing streets, to do offices of humanity, our good friend might have often been caught, in the very fact of meditating---not verse indeed, but very useful, honest prose. This will, perhaps, appear an oddity: Be it so: it saved much time however; and it grew from a contemplative habit; for the simplicity of his spirit was most remote from all affectation.

And now, it is hoped, such unwearied diligence in his vocation, may well account for so much work done in it; and should also be a powerful incentive to others, to stir up every gift that is in them; the rather, as it does not appear that the Doctor's pre-eminence lay in the possession of natural powers, greatly beyond

yond the common rate of men ; (though unquestionably he had genius, and various considerable abilities of mind) so much as in the culture and application of them ; and in the vigour they derived from the assistance of a good heart. But, as these advantages are attainable by all, who are not wanting to themselves ; by all who feel that best ambition, of being good stewards of the manifold grace of God ; may not this excellent man's character and conduct be, with great propriety, set forth as a pattern of imitation to others ; the only valuable end, it should seem, of such exhibitions ?

As to circumstances little interesting, I have neither lights, nor curiosity to inquire. In so private a walk of life, and so little diversified, it is scarce to be expected that incidents, worth recording, should have occurred. Adventures rarely mark the lives of wise and good men : they hold on the noiseless tenour of their way ; and as seldom is true modesty the hero of its own tale. Happy is it for the world, that such men are born into it ; where, or when, is of little moment ; nor am I instructed in these curious points:

If any memoir remain, relating to them, which deserves notice, it may be produced. I only know, that his early education was under the direction of an uncle; a venerable and learned man, as the times then were; and whose memory the Doctor treated much in the same strain of respect, as *Horace* did that of his father. His preparatory studies were greatly assisted by the wise counsels of a man, now generally known, and justly admired, the late reverend Mr. *Abernethy*; nor could any pupil well profit more, by example and precept. He afterwards finished his course of study, at the university in *Glasgow*; which, in testimony of regard to his merit, conferred on him the degree of Doctor in divinity. But, indeed he was much more indebted to the endowments of nature, and his own industry, than to any school of learning, commonly so called. This reminds me of his having resided in another seat of the muses, *Cambridge*; not as a disciple, but as the pastor of a small congregation; where he enjoyed his beloved retirement, the advantage of books, and of learned conversation; which he

most

most diligently improved, during the space of ten or eleven years; laying in such a fund of useful knowledge, as is very rarely associated with so much modest reserve--- Communicative, indeed, where time and place called upon him; but never magisterial, nor obtrusive; even on occasions devoted to philosophical and literary converse, by younger students, in whose company his humane and social spirit much delighted; and where his merit, and a becoming deference for it, gave him a right to preside with authority. The writer of this sketch recollects the evening hours, sacred to improving and manly inquiries, in company of this best of men, with the highest pleasure, mixt with the tenderest regret for his loss---*Quis desiderii sit modus, aut pudor tam chari capitis?*

It was omitted above, that his power of doing good was extended, as well as his calls abroad multiplied, by his medical knowledge; which, however, he administered with his usual delicacy and prudence, for the relief of diseased poverty, where the physician's assistance was out of reach. Nor, perhaps, was it easy to

and safer advice; at least, no where a stronger propensity, to mitigate those various maladies which flesh is heir to. Whether he had ever turned his thoughts to medicine as a profession, or that his taste for every valuable branch of natural knowledge, first led him into this road, I know not: more probably, his humanity prompted him to seek relief for the diseased; to whom his duty, as a divine, often called him.

One thing adds much to his praise, that though his mind was early pre-occupied by the high systematic theology, then in fashion; yet he had the strength of mind to emancipate himself from all human authority, in matters of religion; and perhaps nothing more obstinately adheres, than the first infusions of this sort---*Quo semel est imbuta recens, &c.*---Inasmuch that where superstition, and want of discernment, have once confounded genuine religion with the inventions of men, these latter, if ever discarded, are very apt to carry off the other with them; and the man is either set a drift before every wind of doctrine, or set fast in the shallows of incredulity.

Sudden

Sudden fallies of passion come out strongly on the countenance, as the rushing of water before a sudden breeze; and again quickly vanish with their cause: whereas, a settled calm and serenity of look, must grow from inward tranquillity; from an established prevalence of social and benevolent affections. Then, indeed, the countenance effuses a mild and gentle light: even where there is a natural shade of the austere and saturnine, it dissolves into softness and good humour. It was in these one might instantly discern the goodness of the Doctor's heart; not in the lines of his face. This is indeed the true charm which lights up the human face divine. The natural tone of our friend's passions was strong: however, I am convinced he could not have kept in countenance the supposed face-critic of *Socrates*, by the confession that illustrious father of true philosophy is reported to have made. Be that as it may, the purity of Dr. *Duchall's* manners was, in all respects, most exemplary, and free from stain.

This suggests another important article
As that eminent sage, above-mentioned, was
distinguished

distinguished by enforcing generous and rational sentiments of piety; (which, at least before Christianity, appears but little recognized in the practice, and doctrines, of the then prevailing religions;) so was our friend a fair and living pattern of that genuine piety, so necessary to finish the religious character, and its brightest ornament. In him it was a vital principle, wrought into the inmost habit—The fire of true devotion at once warms the heart, and enlightens, and invigorates all the higher powers of the soul; while the false is a consuming fire to the intellectual faculties; often evaporating into the wild fervors of enthusiasm; again, sinking into the dregs of superstition—The true, unsullied by such fumes, and pure from the base alloy of animal passions, burns with an equal, clear, and gentle flame. It bursts not out into impetuous sallies, which agitate and disfigure—the deformity, so to speak, not the beauty of holiness. The warmth of devotion is attemper'd by cool reason, not unanimated; its exterior exertions result from the proprieties of occasion, and the calls of duty; equally remote from false shame, and that ostentation

tion which loves to be seen of men. Such evidently appeared the piety of our good Doctor : his whole life bore witness to it ; so will his writings, to the devout reader.

Toward the close of life, he seemed to have caught something of the present prevailing spirit, with regard to the original language of the old Testament ; still, perhaps, a study more becoming Divines, than common : and, no doubt, useful, under the direction of a sound head, like his : here also his renewed diligence had made very considerable progress : But he regretted it, that this sort of knowledge is apt to puff up ; engendring foolish questions, and strifes of words ; with which men of visionary and fanatical heads run riot ; some of them, possibly, the dupes of those who lye in wait to deceive, and are unfriendly to the civil and religious liberties of mankind. Certain however it is, that our friend thought the cause of truth and religion, in no small danger, by the extraction of doctrines, and systems, from *hebrew* and *greek* roots, &c. No wonder if ignorance is led astray, when learning thus wanders from the road of common sense !

His

His taste, in what is called polite learning, was correct and elegant : his skill in the languages of *Greece* and *Rome*, gave him easy access to their finest writers : these sages of antiquity he conversed with, to the last, when the duties of his profession permitted ; and he entered, with the spirit of true criticism, into their numberless beauties. With due reverence be it spoken of modern improvements, many and important, doubtless, in several branches of science ; yet still these ancients, as earliest, stand justly foremost in the republic of letters ; unequalled hitherto in the finer arts, and undoubted masters in composition ; at least if richness of invention, a correct and temper'd fire of imagination, if propriety of sentiment, if harmony and purity of diction, with accuracy of distribution—in one word, if a happy imitation of nature, can justly intitle to this honourable distinction. Might it not have very salutary effects, if the professed instructors of mankind, who are in possession of the most interesting topics, and who are set apart publicly to plead the cause of virtue and religion, would

would but sacrifice a little more to the Graces; and even deign to light up the flames of christian oratory, from pagan altars? No fire is unhallowed, but by prostitution to a bad purpose: It may be consecrated to the best; and will burn, with un sullied lustre, in the temple of the true God: and all aids seem now necessary, to warm, to animate, to persuade. The business of religion is found to stick more at the heart, than at the head. How contrary to this is the common practice of many divines; who, instead of drawing men on to perfection, by the powers of sacred eloquence, labour generally at laying the foundation anew? and whereas, for the time, they might have built up living temples; still suppose it necessary to teach, with endless repetition, which be the first principles of the oracles of God--- But to return; such was not the practice of our friend. Far from the insipidity, at best, of an everlasting *crambe recolta*, he frequently pours out his heart in the warmest strains; but well refined, by passing through a cool and discerning head--- an head equally removed from the muddy boiling

boiling up of enthusiastic zeal; as from that cold clearness, which runs tinkling over a barren surface, and only reflects the nothingness at bottom. Excuse, my friend this honest warmth, or temper it with your cooler judgment.

Thus far then in general; but in particular, as to the following discourses; they are almost taken at a venture, from the mighty mass above-mentioned; because such a vein of strong manly sense, and of rational piety, runs through the whole, as made it difficult to find any principle of selection. They are all the first flow of thought; sometimes, as before observed, committed to paper at one sitting; and without any view to the press, or public at large. None of them appear to have been written a new, or at all revised by the author; and therefore may be supposed very much alike, unless where a more interesting subject, or a more happy hour of composing, may have made a difference. Without doubt they had appeared to greater advantage, in his own finishing: but his fervent zeal to do good; to keep awake,
by

by variety, the attention of his audience; and his modesty, which confined his views to that purpose, prevented his own selection and revival of any, except one volume on the presumptive arguments in favour of the Christian religion; which were rather given up to the importunity of his friends, than by himself destined for publication. It will not then be thought strange, if our author's discourses should not bear a critical examen, with regard to the minutiae of composition: more important matters engaged his attention; nor was fame, as a writer, by any means his aim. But it is hoped, the reader who peruses them with simplicity of spirit, with the purpose of becoming wiser and better, will not lose his labour: He will find a rich variety of interesting matter, strong reasoning, just sentiments of religion, often enforced by a pathetic animated manner, happily conspiring, at once to enlighten the understanding, and to persuade the heart. Repetitions, or a sameness of thought, and expression, will doubtless sometimes occur: but this recurrence will chiefly be found, in matters which

which lye at the root of all religion, and virtue; and evidently very near to the Doctor's heart; far unlike that thin, starvling, common-place-work, which is the produce of a barren head, or of an unfeeling heart! With regard to correction in smaller matters, for the greater needed it not, such as the adjusting of points and particles, lopping off a few luxuriances, and reducing to closer order some shoots too widely spread; care has been taken, neither to give disgust to the intelligent reader, nor obstruction to the less knowing. ---It must, I think, in general be admitted, that amplification is a favourite figure in pulpit-eloquence; often, perhaps, not inexpedient for the audience, and to the orator himself, by no means grievous. However, pleonasm and expletive, two very puffy rhetorical matters, are apt to usurp the room of what is more solid. Would not the prescription of *Horace*, well applied, cure this bloated distemper?---*Est brevitæ opus ut currat sententia, neu se, impediât verbis lassas onerantibus aures*--- that is, Be brief, write close; then will neither sentence, nor sentiment, heavily drawl all along.

Our

Our author was often solicited, instead of piling up new matter, to chuse and prepare from the old stock, what he thought fittest for the press: but his own good taste, and his deference for that of the public, he probably felt would engage him in a task, which his many avocations, his growing years and infirmities, would render irksome. However, he gave some hopes of gratifying the request of friends; when death, long a favourite object of his thoughts, approaching unseen---Death, which intercepts the hope of mortals, and breaks off the purposes of the heart, put a period to the labours of this most worthy man, on the 4th of May, 1761, when he had compleated his sixty fourth year. Indeed, a course of incessant labour had worn down his constitution, not naturally strong: But neither the decline of age, nor the remonstrances of his friends, could prevail to abate the fervour of his spirit. He rather chose to wear out with honourable toil, than with the rust of inactivity.

Thus lived Doctor *Duchal*, the delight of his friends! thus he died, deeply re-

gretted by all who knew him! and at a season too, when, seemingly, such worth was greatly needed: So we fond and short-sighted mortals count; Yet---*Aliter Dis visum superis!* and silent submission only remains. Look down thou blessed spirit! ---But I forget; with you, the invocation of saints is more than even a poetic licence.---And now, my friend, admitting sovereign perfection to preside over human affairs; If there does exist, as surely all nature attests, a power above us, who delights in virtue; must not the righteous man triumph in death? Can it be other than a new birth, to a more exalted state of life, to a more consummate felicity, than the heart of man can now conceive? Virtue is the perfection of our highest powers, the image of Divinity within us! matured by discipline, it is necessarily related to objects, "beyond this visible diurnal sphere"---to the supreme Being himself, the supreme Good! Can it then, in its most finished state, in the the article of dying, be quenched in eternal darkness? If so, all moral order is subverted; and Chaos is come again! Abstracted from supernatural testimony, this
single

single phenomenon of the good man's exit from the present transitory scene, by appointment of the great Master of the Drama, reflects, one would think, such light of evidence, as nothing can put out, but that folly which has forfeited the joyful hopes of Immortality; or cogitations dark as Erebus---at least, it should seem that there is nothing, in all the magazine of metaphysics, so satisfactory against the fear of extinction, in Death!

righteousness of the good man's
heart from the present testimony given by
the appointment of the great Master of the
world, which would think, look
right of evidence as nothing, and the
fact of the folly which has tormented the
of all hopes of immortality, or certain-
ty of death as certain--as itself, it should
be that there is nothing, in all the
nature of metaphysics, to satisfactory
of the fact of existence, in itself.

C O N T E N T S.

S E R M. I.

ALL the works of God, in their natural state, beautiful and lovely; the happiness of moral agents necessarily connected with the sound and healthful state of the mind, or with virtue.

Gen. i. 31.

*And God saw every thing that he had made,
and behold it was very good.* page 1

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Ecclesiastes ii. 23.

For all his days are sorrows, and his travel grief; yea his heart taketh not rest in the night. This also is vanity. page 258

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That the present state has a plain reference to a future invisible one, unspeakably greater and more august; and that in both, the same glorious design is uniformly carried on.

2 Corinth. iv. 18.

While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

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S E R M. XII.

The infinite importance of the love of
God, &c.

2 Theſſal. iii. 5.

*And the the Lord direct your heart into the
love of God, and into the patient waiting
for Chriſt.*

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The great importance of not being enſlav-
ed by any deſire.

1 Corinth. vi. 12.

*All things are lawful for me, but all things
are not expedient; all things are lawful
for me, but I will not be brought under the
power of any.*

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Our abſolute dependence on God.

Acts xvii. 28.

*For in him we live, and move, and have our
being.*

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our abſolute dependence on God.

Acts xvii. 28.

*For in him we live, and move, and have our
being.*

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S E R M. XVI.

What is imported in keeping the heart,
and the beſt means of doing it.

Proverbs iv. 23.

*Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it
are the iſſues of life.*

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SERMON I.

All the works of God, in their natural state, beautiful and lovely; the happiness of moral agents necessarily connected with the sound and healthful state of the mind, or with virtue.

GEN. I. 31.

And God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good.

THUS the Creator is represented as surveying the finished work of creation, in this world, and pleased with it as good, that is, as answering his intention, and the purpose for which it was made. And what is before said concerning some particular parts, is here pronounced concerning the

VOL. II. B whole.

SERM. whole. Upon the most superficial view
I. of nature, we cannot but observe the
traces of most exquisite design, and how
wonderfully every thing is adapted to the
end for which it was made; the curious
who have carried their inquiries far into
nature's works which are not obvious to
common view, how much have they been
surprized with the excellence and beauty
of that workmanship, in every thing, in-
deed, wonderful? Whether we look to the
heavens over our heads, or to the earth
under our feet, and the furniture of it;
whether we consider the magnificence of
these works of God, or the curious con-
trivance of them, the various systems into
which they are ranged, and the harmony
of these, making one great whole, we
cannot but adore the wisdom and power
of the great Architect, every where dis-
played.

To be a little more particular; the sun,
and moon, and stars, which God hath or-
dained, how do they garnish the heavens!
How beneficial their light and influences!
How admirable their order, and how per-
fect their harmony! Many of them vast
bodies, moving through spaces almost in-
con-

beautiful and lovely, &c.

3

conceivably large, with amazing velocity; yet no disorder, no tumult. The whole appearing to the spectator perfectly quiet and still; and all the ordinances of heaven, to this day, continuing as infinite wisdom at the first fixed them. SERM.
I.

Who can look upon that great orb which is the fountain of light and day to this world, and this system; who, I say, can look upon it shining in its full splendor, without pleasing wonder? How much doth this world owe to the genial warmth communicated from it? It is the immediate cause of all productions of the vegetable kind, and not less necessary to the animal. How doth the rising sun seem to cheer all nature; and to diffuse light and life! The Psalmist represents him as *a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and as a strong man rejoicing to run his race. His going forth, says he, is from the end of heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it, and there is nothing hidden from his heat.*

Again, look upon the earth under the influences of the genial warmth of spring; how gay and pleasing does it appear! The whole face of it covered with a beautiful living green; and varied with innumerable

SERM. able flowers, which God hath cloathed

I. and decked; and which in their youthful bloom give so much joy and delight to the spectator. How lively the colours! with what exquisite curiosity, with what pleasing variety are their shades contrived! When the lofty trees too of the forest appear in their new cloathing; and the fruit-trees, in their blossoms, promise their annual tribute to the animal world, how pleasing the scene! Again, when we look upon the fields *white unto harvest*, and bringing forth food for man and beast, how natural is it to admire, to rejoice in the goodness of him who is said to clothe the valleys with corn! All these works of God praise him, and nature seemeth universally to rejoice.

Look again into the animal world, into the various orders and kinds in it, from the great Leviathan which ruleth the deep, and the Elephant hugest of land animals, down to those insects, many of which are so small as to escape the notice of the unassisted eye; and probably some of them too minute to be discovered by our best glasses; how unspeakably various their orders and kinds! what multitudes of individuals!

beautiful and lovely, &c.

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dividuals ! how astonishing are all ! fitted S E R M.
with parts, and members, and powers, I.
and instincts, for the elements they are
to inhabit, and the purposes they are to
serve ; for finding out, and using their
proper and necessary sustenance ! Here is
an immensely large field of contemplation,
to which, in reading the holy scriptures,
our thoughts are often turned ; more
particularly in the book of Psalms. But
what I would chiefly observe, is the rich
appearance which nature makes in her infinitely
various productions, and how gay and
pleasing ; especially, in what abundance
life is communicated ; and how much,
in the various orders of it, is enjoyed ;
even the lowest animals having their share
of delight and happiness ; which many of
them we see manifest in a most sensible
manner ; especially in youth ; but always
when they are in health, and at ease. And
though they are liable to much pain and
suffering, which they can very affectingly
as well as sensibly express, as the vegetable
kinds have likewise their disorders and
sickness ; yet, when nature is in its right
state, all looks gay, and pleasing, and happy.

B 3

But

SERM. But we may be sure the infinitely wise
 I. and almighty author of nature, who hath
 displayed such contrivance and goodness
 in the vegetable and animal world, was
 not less attentive to his noblest work-
 manship on earth, namely, human nature
 and mankind: and indeed we see that
 he hath been most liberal to our species.

All this fine and rich scene which we
 have been speaking of, and all the fur-
 niture and inhabitants of it, are given
 into the hands of man, who is constituted
 lord of the sublunary creation. This
 is very particularly taken notice of by
 the author of the history of the creation,
 Gen. i. 26. *And God said, let us make man
 in our image, after our likenesses; and let them
 have dominion over the fish of the sea, and
 over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle,
 and over all the earth, and every creeping
 thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God
 created man in his own image, in the image
 of God created he him, male and female cre-
 ated he them, And God blessed them, and
 God said unto them, be fruitful and multiply,
 and replenish the earth, and subdue it, and
 have dominion over the fish of the sea, and
 over the fowl of the air, and over every living
 thing*

beautiful and lovely, &c.

7

thing that moveth upon the earth. And when **SERM.**

we take a view of our own nature, and

I.

the furniture of it, how bountiful hath

our maker been to us ! How curious the

structure of our bodies, and how much

distinguished from the brutal orders, in

erectness of stature, and by the majesty

and beauty of the human countenance !

But what a treasure is there in the pow-

ers of the mind ; in the understanding ;

in the imagination, and invention ; in the

various affections and appetites planted

in us ; in the sense of beauty, and decen-

cy, and dignity ; and especially in the sense

of good and evil, of the morally excellent

and vile ! When we attend to all these

things, we see that man was most happily

adapted to the state in which he was pla-

ced ; and made capable of an unspeakably

various pleasure and happiness, in be-

ing. He hath the pleasures of sense in

common with the inferior brutal orders ;

he has pleasures of the imagination, in

what is great, new, beautiful, or wonder-

ful, which they know little or nothing of.

He has a capacity of receiving knowledge,

to the measure of which, and the progress

which may be made in it, imagination

B 4

itself

SERM. itself cannot fix a certain limit. He has
I. the pleasures which spring from the social affections; and how great and delicate are these! He hath the pleasures, or a capacity of them, which arise from the knowledge of God, and the fruition of his glory; he hath those that spring from a sense of good and evil, from the practice of virtue, and from the highest, that is, moral excellence and beauty; I do but just name these things, as what are well known and familiar to our minds: But we find when they are all laid together, that our maker hath, in our original frame, made very ample provision for us; and that mankind was not less ennobled in the powers of the mind, than in that dominion that was given them over the whole sublunary creation. Let us then suppose a creature thus endowed, in a state in all respects perfectly healthful, and all the powers and principles of action and enjoyment, in a proper state, and exercised regularly towards their proper objects; an understanding, of such great capacity, by daily attention and improvement making progress in knowledge; all the appetites gratified within the limits of
mode-

moderation ; the passions, which are the SERM.
salt of life, so regulated, as effectually to I.
answer their several ends ; but causing no
disorder nor tumult in the soul ; the social
affections yielding, by all their tenderness
and delicacy, the chastest and purest de-
light ; the love of God, a source of the
highest joy ; and the love and constant
practice of righteousness, yielding to men
satisfaction constantly fresh ; in a word,
suppose such a creature acting according
to the intention of nature, and how ex-
cellent and happy must he be ! Existence
to a creature in such a state, must be an
invaluable blessing ; and well might the
adorable creator say concerning this, as
all his other works, that it *was very good*.
A man has a very great treasure, in hav-
ing himself given into his possession.

But hitherto we have considered nature
only in its proper, and its healthful state ;
whereas we all know it is liable to many
disorders, which hurt that state, which
mar the beauty, and spoil the gaiety of its
appearance. We often see this in the
vegetable world ; a gust of blasting wind
makes the flowers to droop and fade ; it
destroys and ruins the glory of the fruit-
tree,

SERM. tree, and of the forest. If the showers

I. from heaven are restrained, and the earth is exposed to a scorching sun; the herbage of the fields sickens and dies. The rich produce of the harvest may be swept away, by the inclemency and tempestuousness of seasons: and the face of nature, at one time all life and beauty, may, at another time, appear as an horrid wilderness. So with respect to the animal kinds, how many and ruinous the disorders they are liable to! The flocks and the herds have their epidemical diseases; and that life which is void of fear and of care, and which, in a state of health, appears so gay and full of enjoyment, is turned into weakness and distress, and bears the characters of suffering and woe. This is often seen to be the case. These sufferings of the vegetable and brutal creation, and of man the Lord of it, are in very poetical strains described by the prophet *Joel*, chap. i. 10. *The field is wasted, the land mourneth, for the corn is wasted, the new wine is dried up, the oyl languisheth. Be ye ashamed, O ye husbandmen; howl, O ye vine-dressers, for the wheat and for the barley, because the harvest of the field is perished. The vine is dried up, and the fig-tree*

beautiful and lovely, &c.

II

tree languisheth, the pomegranate-tree, the palm-tree also, and the apple-tree, even all the trees of the field, are withered, because joy is withered away from the sons of men. SERM. I.

And verse 15, *Alas for the day, for the day of the Lord is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come. Is not the meat cut off before your eyes, yea joy and gladness from the house of our God? The seed is rotten under their clods; the garners are laid desolate, the barns are broken down, for the corn is withered. How do the beasts groan? The herds of cattle are perplexed because they have no pasture, yea the flocks of sheep are made desolate.*

As for human nature, we know it is liable to innumerable disorders. Animal life, in man, is sometimes seen labouring in acute fevers, in racking pains, in wasting consumptions; sometimes groaning under the grievous pressures of famine, or laid waste by the pestilence: Nay, often in the very blossom of it, all its pride and glory are laid in ruins. Besides, human nature is liable to distempers and disorders of which the brutal orders are not susceptible—disorders of the moral kind; which are indeed much more

SERM. more dismal than any which infect mere

I. animal life : For these ruin nature, in its
highest excellencies, and deprive it, of its
purest and most substantial enjoyment.
So man is constituted, that consistently
with most grievous disorders pressing the
animal frame and powers, the mind may
yet be in an excellent and happy state,
having the purest and most satisfying re-
lishes of enjoyment. Whereas, if the
mind is morally sick, that is, corrupted
and depraved, and its powers perverted ;
then the dignity and glory of the man,
all enjoyment properly human, and wor-
thy of his original honourable state, is
lost : nor can that loss possibly be re-
paired by any healthfulness of the animal
frame, by any strength of the mere ani-
mal powers, nor by the highest relishes
of sensual pleasure, or the richest variety
and abundance of it. Prevailing immora-
lity is the very destruction of the soul ;
turning that which was the greatest joy
in the creation, into the most loathsome
deformity. But then it is to be observed,
that this calamitous, and, at the same time,
hateful state of the mind, is of our own
procuring ; it is no part of the work of
God.

God. *He made man upright, but they have* SERM.
sought out many inventions. And the apos- I.
tle James has given us a full account of
this matter, ch. i. 13. *Let no man when*
he is tempted, say, I am tempted of God, for
God cannot be tempted with evil, neither doth
he tempt any man, but every man is tempted
when he is drawn away of his own lust and
enticed. Then when lust hath conceived it
bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished,
bringeth forth death. It is from the guilty
consent of the soul to the clamorous de-
mands of irregular and enflamed passion,
that all this evil takes its rise. However,
it is only this death of the soul, its cor-
ruption and depravity, which can render
human nature hateful and abominable.
It is in itself an excellent and lovely form ;
hath the noblest excellence and beauty,
when in a right moral state, such as was
represented before ; but when this come-
liness is turned into corruption, all is lost.
The sum of what I have been saying is,
that nature, in all its productions, when
free from distemper, and in a proper state,
is beautiful and lovely ; in its animal pro-
ductions, full of life, full of pleasure and
enjoyment. And this especially is the case,
with

SERMON. with respect to mankind in a right moral

I. state; as just the reverse is the case, in
 a state of depravity.

Now, this leads to what was meant principally to be insisted upon; and on account of which, indeed, I chose this subject; namely, the unaccountable folly and absurdity of men, who are in quest of happiness in the ways of sin and unrighteousness, altho' these are a direct contradiction to nature, tend to ruin the excellencies of it, and put it intirely out of its course. This folly and absurdity is undoubtedly very common. All men are necessarily determined to seek after happiness: and it is inconceivable that any man should follow licentious and wicked courses of life, unless he imagined that in these he should find the greatest measure of pleasure and happiness; or that he should, with obstinacy, avoid the paths of virtue and wisdom, unless he thought that in these his enjoyments should be restrained; and that he should be shut up in an uneasy, and in a painful state. This I take to be, if one might term it so, the very core of all the mischief, the original depravity of the mind,

by

by which men are led astray. There is **SERM.**

in their heart a reluctance against holiness of life, considered as a grievous yoke, **I.**

as that which checks a person in that liberty of gratifying his desires and inclinations, which is so pleasing. And, as to those high relishes of joy and pleasure, which are said to be found in the ways of righteousness and religious obedience, such characters have no notion of them; if they may be permitted only, to go on with an unrestrained license in gratifying their present desires, which is their paradise, let who will, for them, follow after the joys of a virtuous life, and the rewards of it—I add, the rewards of it; for though these are spoken of as most ample and glorious, as what shall make men compleatly and eternally happy; yet they are of such a nature that the unrighteous can have no taste for them, nor delight in them; and if such men at all desire to be received into heaven, it is merely to escape dreadful pain, which is really their motive; for neither the company nor the exercises, nor the entertainments of the world above, can be agreeable to them: In truth, against all these things

SERM. things they have a rooted aversion; *the*

I. *carnal mind is enmity against God*; and how
 can it, in such a state, find delight in his
 presence, or relish those pure pleasures
 which are at his right hand? *This I take*
 to be a just representation of the state of
 the mind labouring under, or, one should
 rather say, enslaved by such prejudices.
 And could men attain to a right sense of
 things, and be thoroughly convinced that
the ways of wisdom are pleasantness, and all
her paths peace; that she is a tree of life to
them who find her, and that which alone
 beareth true happiness; they would then,
 in the most cordial manner, embrace wis-
 dom, and follow her divine dictates. This
 is a point which can never be too much
 laboured in our own minds. Now, to
 convince men of this truth, and to give
 them full satisfaction, what hath been said
 in this discourse, may be very effectually
 applied. If a state of holiness and righ-
 teousness is that state which is suitable to
 nature, and in which the very perfection
 of it consists; then surely this state, and
 this only must be truly blessed and happy;
 and every thing opposite to these, must
 hurt nature, and tend to wretchedness.

Will

Will any man say that a state unnatural, S E R M.
and quite opposite to nature's design, can I.
be a pleasing and happy one? A state, in
which every thing tends to ruin and de-
struction! In which, all health and sound-
ness is lost! As well may one say, that
men can be happy, and have the enjoy-
ment of life, when they are labouring in
a burning fever, or amidst pains of the
head or heart, or under any other griev-
ous sickness. Look upon the face of na-
ture around us, as has been already ob-
served, when it is in a state perfectly
sound and healthful, and how gay, how
pleasing, doth it appear! But how much
otherwise does it appear, when distemper
is preying upon the beauties of it! When
the parched earth becomes as a wilderness,
and the living green is withered away!
When the flowers of the field, by a ma-
lignant blast, fade, and all their glory is
lost! When contagious distempers in the
flocks, consume them! When a murrain
seizes on the herds, depriving them of
strength and life! Or, see how an animal,
rejoicing in that life which nature hath
given it, joyous and pleased in following
its own instincts, how I say, it appears

SERM. when taken out of its proper element!

I. We then see no more gaiety, no more pleasure, no more enjoyment. And so it is universally; whatever is in a state unnatural, a state in which nature is disordered and distempered, must be unhappy; with health and soundness, all true enjoyment is lost: Can there be any occasion for farther illustration of this? But again, to finish this argument, will any person say, and stand by it, that a state of holiness and righteousness is unsuitable to the frame of human nature; or that unrighteousness and vice is suitable to it; that the former is its distemper, and the latter its health and soundness? No surely; the whole frame of nature loudly exclaims against this, and demonstrates the contrary. Can there be a natural, and sound, and healthful state, in which a man is self-condemned, and in which his own conscience necessarily becomes his enemy? Can that be a sound and a natural state, in which blind passions prevail against reason, and the calm dictates of true wisdom? Can that be a sound state and an healthful, in which the noblest affections are cramped, and the tendency of

beautiful and lovely, &c.

19

of them quite obstructed, by those which **SERM.**
are the lowest and meanest? Can that be **I.**

a natural state, in which the mind is at enmity with the most perfect, with infinite excellency and grace? Is that a natural state, in which all largeness and liberality of mind are ruined by a selfish spirit? In which the sense of decency and dignity hath no power? In which animal nature, and the passions of it, are attended to, and most obsequiously served; and the nobler powers and principles neglected? Can that be a natural and sound state, in which the extravagancies of intemperance and debauchery are preferred to sobriety and decency of life; falsehood, injustice, oppression, cruelty and violence, to truth, honour, integrity, generosity, tenderness and compassion? It is absolutely impossible. All these things are the sicknesses and distempers of the soul; utterly inconsistent with its health and soundness; and also with its happiness and enjoyment. Of this let us be all thoroughly convinced. I am far from denying that men actually have pleasure in the ways of vice and unrighteousness; for surely if they had not pleasure in them, they

FIRM would never pursue them: but indeed

I. that pleasure, so far as it is inconsistent with purity, with sobriety, and goodness of heart, is exactly like the apprehended happiness of a person in a delirium by a fever; or like the fine scenes which a disordered imagination creates to itself; and is, in truth, as empty and unsubstantial. Let us attend to what is real health, with respect to the animal frame, when men are free from pain and sickness; when all the animal powers are in such a state as to perform the proper functions, and answer the intentions of them in our make; when the vital fluid moves in a brisk and easy flood, when spirits enough are furnished for the business, and the various services of life; so that men can say they are quite well; what a pleasing sensation have they of complete health! It is afflicting to have this sensation interrupted by sickness or pain, and how pleasing the return of the sensation, when these interruptions have been removed! Just such in kind, but of a much higher relish, are the sensations of the mind, when the spiritual or moral state is sound and healthful; when the moral powers are all capable

ble of, and well disposed for their proper SERM.
functions; now, these pleasing sensations I.
must be the strongest, and yield the high-
est delight, in that state in which the mo-
ral powers are most perfect, and exercised
without any interruption. Then indeed
men will find themselves quite well; per-
fectly easy and satisfied. The more we
have of true worth in this world, the more
we shall have of this sensation of health;
and we shall have it perfectly, and with-
out interruption, in the world above.

Let us rest assured, and to all who have
experience, it is matter not of faith, but
of sense and feeling, that there is as great
reality in the moral or spiritual, as in the
animal life; the powers are as real; the
sense of right and wrong, of excellent and
vile, of lovely and hateful, the original
desire planted in us of excellence, of dig-
nity, and honour, as real; the enjoyments
of the moral life, in the gratifications of
its original appetites, as real; the ten-
dency of that life to its own preservation,
and to avoid what is injurious, the sense
of injury when it has been hurt, and of
soundness and health, when it is safe and
well, all these are most real. And to look

SERMON upon these things as visionary, is a direct contradiction to reason and nature, to feeling and experience. To conclude this argument, how absurd then are these prejudices, by which men become averse to holiness and righteousness, and to that kind of enjoyment and happiness, which God hath annexed to them ! It is as if they believed they should not be happy in a state of most perfect health ; and were uneasy unless when in an infirm and sickly condition. Let all imaginations of this kind be rooted intirely out of us. We can never take a right step while we are under the power of them ; nor shall know solid and substantial happiness, till we get rid of them. I own indeed, that in the holy scriptures, we have representations of the divine life, sometimes, as difficult and laborious ; as a state of tribulation and suffering ; but none of these representations contradict what has been said upon this argument. They relate, principally, to these two things ; first, a state of persecution for conscience sake ; this hath in many ages been the state of good men ; and, in a very particular manner, the state of the disciples of Christ in the first

first ages, of which our blessed Lord often SERM.
forewarned them, and required of them I.
to arm themselves for meeting with such
a state, by the most deliberate, and calm,
and firm resolution. But such persecution,
for conscience sake, is not the state of all
good men; many are free from it. Or
else, these representations in scripture, of
which I have been speaking, relate to the
severities of self-denial; which in the
beginnings of true religion are most pain-
ful, especially when exorbitant passions
have grown to great strength, by habits
of vice, and a continued gratification of
them; or they relate to some temptati-
ons particularly strong, to which, in the
present state, the integrity of the servants
of God may be exposed. But it never was,
nor could it be, the intention of them to
teach, that holiness and righteousness are
not the health and soundness of the mind;
or that in the enjoyment of such health,
men should not find themselves so far,
completely happy. For this is the lan-
guage of nature, of scripture, and of ex-
perience, in every instance in which there
has been experience, without one excep-
tion. We must therefore adhere to these

SERMON. two great principles, that in holiness and

I. righteousness consist the soundness and health of the mind; and that in such a state of health and soundness, men shall find themselves really happy.

That I may come to a conclusion of this discourse; it must be owned, notwithstanding all the disadvantages we labour under, that human nature is an excellent work of God: But to estimate it rightly, we must not attend to it as defiled and corrupted, as rendered abominable, by vice; we must consider what it was originally made for, and in what a pleasing and honourable light, by means of religious and virtuous culture and discipline, it may appear. As it is originally the noblest work of God in this world, so, by corruption and depravity, it may, and has in many instances, become not only mean and low, but indeed hateful and offensive; that it ever has become such, we are not to ascribe to our maker, but to ourselves: For, let us view it as arrayed in the robes of purity and righteousness, as enriched with holy and worthy dispositions, as full of the love of God and charity, of the most generous and liberal sentiments;

timents ; and then it is truly of a lovely SERM.
 form. God might well be introduced as I.
 saying concerning it, before it was at all
 depraved, as he did concerning his other
 works, that it *was very good*. It was, in-
 deed, perfectly worthy of the divine coun-
 sel concerning it, *made in the likeness of God*,
 and worthy to be at the summit of this
 sublunary creation. But as it is capable
 of being deprived of this excellence, and
 of sinking into a most miserable and de-
 formed state, so I do not think any thing
 is more useful than serious observation of
 the appearance it makes, in those charac-
 ters in which virtue and holiness are tru-
 ly illustrious ; and on the other hand, of
 it's wretched appearance, in a state of the
 greatest moral deformity. When we com-
 pare the very best men whom history has
 recorded, or who have come under our
 own observation, with the very worst and
 most wicked of mankind, how wide a
 difference must we perceive ! See a per-
 son abandoned to the impurities of the
 flesh, to intemperance and debauchery ;
 a person false and treacherous, selfish, and
 without any bowels to others ; revenge-
 ful and cruel ; in a word, seeming to take
 plea-

SERM. pleasure in all mischief and wickedness;

I and who does not loath the character? Set against this the love of God, undissembled good will and charity to mankind, purity and chastity of manners, the strictest justice and righteousness, the greatest liberality of heart and hand, tenderness, exact fidelity, meekness, humility, and such other graces, in that eminence in which they have appeared in some characters; and who but must highly esteem, and love? Who would choose to be of the former, who would not choose to be of the latter class? Even a bad man would, perhaps, abhor the thoughts of being the worst man. Yet certainly the very same reasons, for which he would abhor being the worst man, should prevail against his being a bad man at all. But, I say, human nature as it appears in the finishings of moral improvement, is indeed excellent, and lovely, and worthy of it's glorious author. Let us then ever remember, that in virtue it's excellency and beauty, it's health and soundness, consist; and that consequently from this, it's highest enjoyment springs. In another, a contrary state, we may imagine ourselves happy; in this

we

we shall feel ourselves so, and find substantial rest to our souls. Let us then embrace holiness and righteousness of life, with that earnestness with which we would in sickness embrace health; or with which, being deformed, we would embrace comeliness and beauty; or in a state of penury and want, would embrace plenty and fulness; ever remembering that what is against nature, must be unhappy; and that true felicity arises from thinking and acting according to it.

SERM.
I.

SERMON

SERMON II.

To be filled with the fulness of
God, explained and illustrated.

EPHES. III. 19.

And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

IT is certain there is no eloquence equal to that in which the fulness of the heart expresses itself. When men have a lively sense, in their own minds, of the subjects upon which they speak; and the imagination is thoroughly warmed; they then cannot well be at a loss; but will, in the most natural manner, and with the greatest force of expression, explain their sentiments to others. This will be especially remarkable, when the subject is in itself great, sublime, and important;

portant; such as thoroughly possesses the SERM. soul, and engages the affections. And, **II.** surely, this cannot be said concerning any subjects, equally with those that are divine; such as the existence, and perfections of God; the goodness that appears in the whole of his administration towards the children of men; especially their redemption by our Lord Jesus Christ, and the glorious hopes that are founded upon the christian revelation. How should a just sense of these things dilate the heart! What eloquence should it inspire! And with how happy and easy a flow will men, thus animated, pour forth their sentiments in the praises of God! In such a fulness of heart, the Psalmist tells us, in the 45th Psalm, *that his tongue was as the pen of a ready writer.* But none of the sacred writers are more eminent, in this respect, than the apostle *Paul*. The attentive and intelligent reader often sees that he rises, as it were, into rapture; pouring out his heart in a torrent of the loftiest sentiments, and of the strongest expressions. Language itself seems, upon some occasions, to fail him. In such a temper you may plainly see he was, when he wrote the pas-

SERM. passage of which my text is a part. It

II. begins at the 14th verse. For this cause

I bow my knees unto the father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant unto you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his spirit in the inner man. That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that you being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, that passeth knowledge; that you might be filled with all the fulness of God. It is the truest sublime to which he here rises; and he appears to have felt what the fulness of God means, when he thus expressed himself. He prays for the Ephesians, that God, according to the riches of his glory, or his glorious riches, meaning the grace of God, would strengthen them with might by his spirit in the inner man. That by the happy influences of that divine agent, they might be confirmed in the profession and practice of the christian religion; prepared also to resist and overcome all temptation to depart from it. He prays that, by faith, Christ

may

explained and illustrated.

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may dwell in their hearts. That is, that SERMON.
they might attain such a faith, as would II.
make their hearts and best affections sa-
cred to Christ; such as would make their
souls a fit habitation for him, by purify-
ing them from all vicious and irregular
affections; and bringing their whole spi-
rits into a thorough conformity to his will.
So we read, that *faith purifies the heart*;
and that christians, *with open face, behold-
ing as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are
changed into the same image.* He farther
goes on, *that you may be rooted, and ground-
ed in love, and may be able to comprehend
with all saints, what is the breadth, and
length, and depth, and height, and to know
the love of Christ that passeth knowledge.*
Rooted and grounded in love! represent-
ing christians as planted in love; and very
justly indeed; for their religion is love;
and in this they grow; by this likewise
they are prepared for a just sense of the
love of Christ; which the author calls a
*comprehending with all saints the length,
breadth, depth, and height of it,* by a very
significant accumulation of metaphorical
expressions, and a certain energy in them,
that exceeds the limits of strict propriety;
thus

SERM. thus setting forth its incomprehensible

II. greatness. For he did not mean that any one could fully comprehend it, in the common acceptation of that term, as he expressly declares it passeth knowledge; and then concludes with the utmost effort, as it were, of expression, *that they might be filled with, or to all, the fulness of God*; all that fulness in which God communicates himself, and the gifts of his grace, to his servants; and all the fulness of their enjoyment of him.

These words, "*Being filled with all the fulness of God*," do strongly represent the honour, the true riches, and the happiness of those servants of Christ who are arrived at the higher eminencies of religion: They represent a state of the mind, with which it must be supposed the apostle's experience made him well acquainted; and in which he enjoyed that divine satisfaction which he wishes for his friends. He really seems, at the instant he wrote this, to be himself full of what he prayed for on their behalf; and expresses, in the strongest terms, the overflowing of his own heart.

It

It must, one would think, be an agree-
 able, as well as an useful entertainment,
 to make such observations upon this state
 of mind, as tend to explain it; and by
 that means, to kindle in us desires of at-
 taining to it. And this is what I propose
 to do, in the present discourse. The ac-
 count which the Apostle John gives us of
 God, will greatly assist our meditations
 on this subject. *God saith he, is light,*
and God is love. To be full of God
 then, in this view, is to be full of light,
 and of love: Which is also very agreeable
 to the Apostle Paul's sense of the matter;
 as we may collect it from the verses above
 recited, preceding the text. There he
 prays for the Ephesians, *that Christ might*
dwell in their hearts by faith, (which is the
 fruit of divine light,) *and that they might*
be rooted and grounded in love; and what
 indeed, should the fulness of God be, which
 is spoken of in the text, but a fulness of
 these two? The truth is, the most perfect
 state of a christian must be supposed to
 consist in them, and in the happiness ne-
 cessarily resulting from them. He who
 is full of light and love, has attained to
 the highest degree; in him the divine

SERM.
II.

VOL. II.

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image

SERM. image is most fair and beautiful. But to
 II. be particular.

God is light, and in him, saith St. John, *is no darkness at all:* He is the fountain of light to his creatures: He is the author of our rational powers; by which we compare things together, and form judgments concerning them; and by which we are capable, from known and certain principles, of pursuing truth through a great variety of steps and consequences. He is also the author of those, very properly called, higher powers and senses, by which we perceive, in matters of morality, the beautiful and the deformed, the great and the mean, the pure and impure, the praiseworthy and reproachful. All these sensations are originally from the father of lights; from him, by whom every man that cometh into the world is in some measure enlightened, in the knowledge of what is true, and what is right. But as ignorance and darkness, through the negligence, and corrupt prejudices, and wickedness of men, had greatly prevailed from age to age; as blind superstition and idolatry, and the worst practical errors, had as it were taken, and kept possession of

of the world, for a long time ; it therefore pleased God to reveal his will from heaven ; to point out to mankind the way to salvation ; in the earlier ages more imperfectly ; then encreasing this light by degrees, till at length, the sun of righteousness arose, bringing with him a fulness of day ; that is, the son of God, coming from the bosom of the father, fully revealed him to mankind, and all the counsels of his grace. *In him was light, and the light was the life of men.* He appeared to turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God ; to open the eyes of the blind, and to lead them in paths by which they had not walked.

Unspeakable are the advantages we enjoy by the gospel. How easily does a true disciple of Christ attain to such measures of the knowledge of God, of his perfections, his administration, and gracious designs, as the antients, of whatever age or nation, without this clearer revelation, could not by all their researches arrive at. How easily are we now enabled to remove whatever real or apparent difficulties ; with respect to the method of appeasing the offended Deity, of procuring the pardon

SERM. of sin, and with respect to what should

II.

become of us at death ; difficulties, which, on some occasions, greatly puzzled the wisest men of old ; and from some of them, drew very moving expressions of perplexity and doubt. But after all, the knowledge of God, *in Christ reconciling the world to himself ; not imputing our iniquities to us*, and opening the fairest prospect into immortality ; even this knowledge, I say, when it goes no farther than speculation, is of small avail : for men may be very fully instructed in it, and yet remain in utter darkness. Corrupt prejudices, and evil affections, may have still the possession of their hearts ; and they may thus continue strangers to the light of life : For there is the widest difference between this state of the mind, and that wherein men are under the power of truth, new-molded, and transformed by it. This is that illumination and knowledge, by which *they are changed into the image of God, from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord*. It is that light, which becomes a vital principle ; and in which men have such clear impressions of things, as determine them to avoid evil, and

and cleave to that which is good. Thus ^{SERM.} to know God and our Saviour, is eternal ^{II.} life : And this knowledge, the holy scriptures teach us to ascribe to the spirit of God.

Now as light, taken in the moral sense, does not only signify the knowledge of the truth ; but likewise, and principally, a right sense of things as they are good or evil, lovely or the contrary, with dispositions of mind suitable to such a sense ; in like manner, as moral darkness does not only signify mere ignorance ; but rather corrupt prejudices, and the bad affections that grow from them : hence it is evident, that when men have this holy light diffused through their souls ; they must then also be full of holy love : It is apparent from what has been already said, that these two are inseparably connected ; and therefore in the holy scriptures, knowledge is often used to signify love. For the objects of this knowledge, are not speculative abstracted truths , but such as the affections are to be regulated by : they are such objects as present to the mind those things that are true, and pure, and lovely, that are honest, and of good

D 3

report ;

SERM. report ; above all, they present to the

II. mind, the glorious moral perfections of the divine Being, and his love to the children of men, made manifest in Jesus Christ. Now, when there is a just sense of these things ; when men have that light by which they can truly discern them ; it is impossible the mind should not be suitably affected ; for what appears lovely to us, while it does so appear, we cannot but love ; just as what appears odious, while it does appear so, we cannot but hate. In no case do we find it is at all in our power, to command, by a mere act of will, a change in our affections : This can be done only by applying to those methods by which our sense of things is altered. Upon the whole, while we have a just sense of good and evil, we shall love the one, and hate the other. The illumination of the mind then, by which men attain to this sense, must be attended with holy love ; they will then certainly delight in what is righteous, pure and good. And above all, that glorious Being who is perfectly righteous, and good and holy, will be the object of their strongest affection, of their highest delight. Thus is
the

the love of God *shed abroad* in the hearts SERM.
of his servants, *by the Holy Ghost.* II.

And as, in a right state of the mind, this love must have the ascendant; so where it has, it proves the most powerful of all principles. All other passions and affections, however naturally vehement, are subjected to, and under the control of it; and every thing corrupt and evil flies before it. As it is exerted in a steady uniform tendency of the spirit to God, as the object of highest delight; so it prepares men for a thorough compliance with his will; for an obedience universal, sincere, and persevering. Agreeably to which, we are taught in scripture, that *this is the love of God that we keep his commandments.* And, therefore, tho' this sacred affection of soul, is to be considered rather as a virtue of the highest rank, than a passion; yet, it has its ardors and emotions; which, if they must go by the name of enthusiasm, it is surely an enthusiasm of a right kind; an enthusiasm, deeply rooted in the human heart. No man, who has any pretensions to what may be called taste, but must know, that in surveying some very distinguished characters,

SERMON. racters, and presenting to his imagination

II. actions peculiarly heroic, his heart is greatly moved; nay he must feel the whole animal frame affected by it; nor does any man account this a blemish and weakness; but in truth, a real excellency; and not to be moved at all, or but weakly, by such characters and actions, speaks a stupid state of mind, a wretched want of taste. For example, he who can read the story of Joseph; or view the illustrious young hero David, in vindication of the honour of Israel's God, accepting the challenge of Goliath; or who can survey the amiable character of Jonathan, and the tenderesses of his friendship; he, I say, who can view all this, without emotion; must be supposed void of the finest feelings of humanity. But now, is it natural, is it highly praise-worthy, to be thus moved with the excellency of imperfect characters; and shall it yet be accounted unnatural if our love to God shall be found attended with sensible ardors? Nay, is it possible, in a right and unconstrain'd state of the mind, to contemplate the most glorious of all beings, without emotion? That Being, whom we discover in his works,

works, by the display of the most astonishing powers and perfections! unerring wisdom, perfect goodness, almighty power! The blessed, unchangeable, original Being! The great universal genius, all order, harmony, and love! *He is, indeed, love; and he that dwells in love, dwells in God, and God in him.* He is, in the highest sense, love; which appears in the communication of being to such numbers and variety of creatures; and in the provision not only made for the support of life, but to render it delightful to them; it appears still more, in the good and kind affections planted in the heart of man, which we cannot but delight in, and account lovely; but, above all, it appears in that *he so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have eternal life.* Whoever has just apprehensions of these things, and attends to them as he ought, must be conscious of sensations suitable to them; and nature must be extremely out of order, if men are strangers to these feelings. To conclude this head, the most important divine gifts and communications

SERMONS are those of holy light, and of life and love, which necessarily flow from them.

II.

But that we may enter more fully into the meaning of this passage, and the spirit of the author; let us consider, that as he must be supposed to speak of those divine communications, in which the servants of Christ rejoice, (and there is none of the sacred writers that more frequently speaks of these than he, or in stronger terms,) as he must, I say, be supposed to speak of these communications; so the expression naturally leads us to consider the greatness of that being, who is the object of the christian faith, and of holy love. We read, in the verse preceding the text, of the breadth, and the height, and the length, and the depth, and of knowing the love of Christ that passeth knowledge; and immediately it is added, that you may be filled with all the fulness of God. This connection suggests to us that unmeasurable expanse, if I may use the expression, described in the 18th verse, as the fulness of God, with which believing minds are filled. *That we may know the height, and depth, and length and breadth, and know the love of Christ that passeth knowledge.*

ledge. The love of Christ is mentioned SERM. and represented as immense, because it is II.

in this that God is most fully disclosed; so that when we know the love of Christ, we best know and *are filled with the fulness of God.* The light of the knowledge of the glory of God, is seen most clearly and fully in the face of Christ. In him, and the councils of God for our redemption by him, we have the most affecting discoveries of divine perfection. When we know Christ, we know the Father: And it is by this knowledge that we attain to the fulness of God.

But, as was said, the Apostles way of expressing himself leads us to consider the immensity of that Being who is the object of the christian faith, and of holy love. It is very certain that there is a wonderful capacity in the human mind; what is great, and magnificent, and sublime, is highly pleasing to it. In many objects, what it can at once fully comprehend within its grasp, it naturally grows weary of; cannot rest in it; and by a noble impatience of limitation, stretches after the still greater and higher in kind, or degree. So, the eye is not satisfied with seeing;
and

SERM. and when the curious traveller has, with

II. much toil and expence, and perhaps with much danger, surveyed one strange region; his appetite is but whetted to see another. In so much that many under the power of this passion, have traversed the greatest part of the globe. Still, supposing curiosity as much satisfied as possible, with the knowledge of our earth, the disposition would nevertheless remain; we would transport ourselves, if we could, to other planets, to other systems. We are, it appears, so made and constituted, that if we had powers and liberty, the immensity of space, and all the worlds in it, would not be accounted too large a field for us: Thus, at least, imagination loves to range.

I mention this cast of the human mind, only to shew that it is formed for great objects of contemplation; and that what is little, and narrow, and circumscribed, becomes a confinement to it. Now, in no one object will a sense of full satisfaction be found, but in God. The attributes of the Deity, which for distinction sake are called natural, such as eternity, necessary existence, the perfect knowledge of all things past, present and to come, at
one

one view; unsearchable contrivance and S E R M.
wisdom, omnipresence, and irresistible power; all these strike the mind with the utmost admiration. We find ourselves lost, yet still delighted, in the contemplation of them: such knowledge is too wonderful for us, it is so high we cannot attain to it. How great that Being who fills immensity! who is *from everlasting to everlasting, God; without variableness or shadow of turning!* Of whose existence no cause or reason can be assigned! But more especially when we turn our thoughts to the goodness of God; that goodness which gave birth to the whole creation, to all the worlds that subsist in the immensity of space, and all the creatures in them; a goodness under the influence of which, and directed by infinite wisdom, almighty power is exerted eternally! Farther, when it is considered that this goodness is essential to God, and unchangeable; that there is no limit to the exercise of it, but what unerring wisdom prescribes; that is, in truth, no limit at all; for wisdom directs only to what is really good, and to deviate from this would not be goodness: when it is considered that all worlds

II.

SERM. worlds have their existence in this almighty and all-good Being; that every creature in the intellectual and moral, in the animal and material world, is under his notice and care; that there is a richness of bounty in him, which knows no bounds but the capacity of the receiver; that this boundless munificence will amply provide for the good of the creation he has made; that all this goodness cannot but be perfectly disinterested and free; that, therefore, it is pure, faithful, every thing that one can wish in the being who is Lord of all; and which is summed up, in the scripture stile, in the word Holiness;—I say, when all this is considered, it presents an object every way suitable to the best state of the human soul, and all its faculties.

Let us now consider, with what exalted delight and veneration, a mind prepared by the diffusion of holy light and love, must contemplate this most glorious object. Such a mind, conscious of integrity, persuaded of the favour of God, as the moral governour of the world, free from painful, servile dread, and confident in God as an eternal friend; with what sa-

ered

cred joy; with what a sense of pure bliss S E R M.
must it overflow! How will the whole II.

soul be full of Deity, as an holy temple consecrated to his service! Who of angels, or of men, can express this? But it is enough that the more the heart is thus filled, the more perfectly will the image of God be drawn: still the more like him men will become, in all worthy dispositions; the more will nature be perfected; the more will the heart be enlarged; and from the exercise of every good affection, a sacred and chaste pleasure will, on every hand, flow into the soul. This is indeed to be filled with all the fulness of God!

And such must be this sense of fulness and satisfaction, as no other state of the mind, no other object, can possibly yield: for it is not only the most excellent and glorious object that fills the mind; but there is also an appropriation of him, as the certain, eternal, unchangeable source of happiness. In this the spirit rests with most perfect tranquillity; it feels itself happy; and while the mind is full of God, nothing that is gloomy, or disquieting can take place; there must be a perfect serenity, and a full contentment.

Here,

SERM. Here, indeed, the sensations alone of men of

II. virtue, and who are best acquainted with
 the divine life, can fully illustrate all this
 to them: yet, even from the principles of
 reason, it must appear, that this is the
 happiest and most pleasing state of the
 mind imaginable. Let Fancy, for example,
 frame to it self a scene of the greatest external
 and sensual enjoyment; still when it has
 enriched and varied this scene to the utmost,
 it will appear no better than vanity and
 vexation of spirit, when compared with
 the fulness of God; for, in none of these
 things can the human mind rest. And
 let those who are strangers to the divine
 life, suffer themselves to be persuaded,
 for it is certainly true, that no satisfaction
 or joy they ever tasted, is equal to what
 the divine life affords. And that all are
 the greatest losers who are estranged from
 this life, whatever other things they may
 possess. I speak not now of the preference
 of spiritual to other joys, on account
 of the short duration and uncertainty
 of the latter; but, on the supposition
 they were to continue with us for
 ever, yet are they nothing when laid in
 the balance with what our author calls
 the

the fulness of God. This, it is hoped, SERM. II.
must appear to the attentive mind, from

the reasoning in this discourse ; in which I hope there has been nothing said, either wild, or weakly enthusiastic ; nothing but what is consistent with the words of truth and soberness. Let it ever then be our study, and our prayer, that *Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith ; that we being rooted and grounded in love, may comprehend with all saints, what is the length, and breadth, and height, and depth, and know the love of Christ that passeth knowledge, and be filled with all the fulness of God.* So much may suffice by way of explanation of this happy state of mind. We shall now make some practical observations upon this subject.

The first then, and that upon which I would mainly insist, is this ; that we ought with great care, to cultivate devout affections ; and apply ourselves to those exercises, by which an intercourse with Heaven is maintained, and fellowship with God : such are principally, religious meditation and prayer. This is certainly the way to be full of God, and consequently of true happiness. It is common-

SERM. ly allowed, and very justly, that prayer,
 II. and such other services of devotion, are
 not prescribed to us on account of any
 advantage they can procure to our Creator; for *He is not worshipped with the hands of men as though he needed any thing*; we are therefore to consider them only as means designed for serving a certain end, namely, to excite and keep up in us worthy and good affections, the perfection and happiness of our nature; and as a preservative from vice and perdition: nor can religious services be of any value, but as they answer these purposes. Now though this is, indeed, very true, consequences however have been drawn from it, that are very false; particularly, that the whole of religion, that is of real worth, consists in probity of mind, in good dispositions and behaviour towards our neighbours; and that where these are found, religious exercises are but little, if at all, useful; and that a constant and serious application to them, is really superstitious. As the natural effect of this way of thinking, a very wide difference may be discerned between our taste and way, and that of our predecessors. A great part of
 their

their religious business lay in the labours of **S E R M.**
the closet; and in a solicitous attendance up- **II.**
on other religious services: whereas we
have learned to be very indifferent as to
these things, and easy in the neglect of
them.

But if we will think justly on this subject, without question, we shall find an extreme defect on our side. Do but consider, how natural it is to pay the utmost deference and veneration to the Divine Being; and to take all proper occasions of expressing it. Is not this what we owe him? Is it not at least as just and equal as to pay regard to distinguished worth in our fellow creatures? and will not that sense of worth, and that affection which determines us to this, as naturally determine us to pay the utmost regard to that Being, whose worth and excellence are quite peerless, and to do him the utmost honour? We read of some in whose thoughts God is not at all; though they know he is their constant benefactor; though they admit that he is excellent and worthy, infinitely above all other beings. Now, can any character be more unnatural than this? and how can men

SERM. who at all think, excuse themselves for

II. any approaches towards it? To be utterly forgetful of God! does not this sound most harshly; and speak, at once, the greatest absurdity, and a disingenuous temper? On the other hand, when we think what God is in himself, and what he is to us; is it not natural that there should be a constant disposition to turn the thoughts to him, with most dutiful and affectionate regard? To the God who loves us; who is constantly doing us good, and in whom we live, and move, and have our being! and whenever we find a disinclination to this, must not the mind be in an unnatural state? In the holy scriptures, in which there appears to be a very thorough acquaintance with human nature, we have the duty of prayer very frequently inculcated upon us; we are taught *to pray always; to be instant in prayer; to continue in it with thanksgiving*; and who can say that this is not a just homage to our Creator? Is it to be supposed that men really love him, and at the same time, continue negligent of these exercises? I shall suppose a person to have arrived to a great pitch of virtue; and that he little needs those

those exercises for the improvement of his own mind, in this respect; yet are they not proper expressions of love, and gratitude, to the Divine Being? and will not love and gratitude to him, very naturally express themselves in acts of devotion? But, alas! it is to be feared, they are but few, very few, who have attained to such a perfection in virtue, that they have no need of religious services, as the means of advancing them in it; one would rather suspect that their neglect of these, is owing to a defect with respect to virtue: for, surely, a mind thoroughly disciplined and good, will love God; and the person who really loves God, must take pleasure in meditating on him, and in fellowship with him. There is indeed a great folly in that superstition which piques itself on many religious services, so called; and in a regular and laboured course of devotion, without attending to the true design of them; which rests upon it, as if merely by the performance of the service, God were pleased; and the whole end of religion answered. But, certain it is, the other extreme is as unnatural, as well as very dangerous.

SERM. But then we are to consider farther,

II.

that it is natural to take pleasure in those exercises here recommended, as what yield the most substantial joy and satisfaction. We turn our thoughts to God, as the object of our highest delight and bliss; and wherever it is felt what it is to be filled with the fulness of God, surely, no other incentive to acts of devotion will be needed. The sacred writers do very frequently and significantly express this; *Then will I go, says the Psalmist, to the altars of God; to God my exceeding joy. And again, One day in thy courts is better than a thousand. It is better to be a door keeper in the house of God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.* Can it be, that there is really the highest pleasure and satisfaction in fellowship with God, in religious services; that men too shall be sensible of this, and yet remain disinclined to them? no certainly. If there be such a disinclination, men either do not really believe that there is such a joy in the fulness of God; or else have no taste for it.

It has often occurred to my thoughts on this subject, how much pleasure men take in conversing with each other, where
there

there is hearty love and friendship. Every face is chearful, and the heart is glad; the hours pass insensibly; and the entertainment, as it is natural and innocent, so it is really one of the principal in human life. And where is it seen, that men of social spirits need incentives to this social intercourse? How naturally does a man run into the company and conversation of his dear friends? Now what is this owing to, but love? A man, indeed, goes with reluctance into company which he dislikes. And is not the reverse equally true; that, in fact, a man must dislike that company which he seldom or never associates with? How obviously applicable this, to the subject of our converse with God! &c.

S E R M.
II.

SERMON III.

The necessity of giving the heart to wisdom; the power the mind has over its affections; and the means by which it may raise and regulate them.

PROVERBS XXIII. 26.

My son give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways.

SERM. III. **T**HE wise author of this book has laid together a great many excellent maxims for the conduct of life; not only with respect to the great ends of it, which can be served no otherwise than by the practice of virtue, a thing he every where inculcates under the name of wisdom; but also with respect to those measures by

by which the conveniences and comforts SERM.
of life, in the several stages and circum- III.
stances of it, may be obtained. And it

will be evident to every one, who reads the book with attention, that it shews a thorough knowledge of human nature, and particularly of the passions of the heart; as likewise, of what will make men satisfied, by yielding them the most perfect fruition of life. The author gives many of his exhortations in the person of a parent; expressing great affection and tenderness, and a solicitude that all should observe his instructions. He speaks as to his children; whose true interests he would by all means promote; and in whose happiness he was deeply concerned. So in the text, *My son give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways.* Give me thine heart. Follow the directions I give thee, with a hearty and thorough inclination, with a full purpose of soul, and a cheerful affectionate compliance, as to a matter which is cordially chosen, and pursued with delight.

More needs not be said for explaining this phrase; as every one knows the difference there is between doing a thing with reluctance

SERM. reluctance, and doing it from the heart;

III. between performing the commands of a superior against the grain, so to speak, by an obedience irksome and grievous; and on the contrary, performing them with pleasure, as from cordial choice, and therefore with affectionate zeal.

But it is of great importance that we should have a thorough satisfaction, as to the reasonableness of this exhortation. For at first sight, it seems not very well to consist with what all men are agreed in, namely, that our affections and inclinations are not in our own power; meaning, that we cannot regulate and dispose of them by a mere volition of our minds; or, which is the same thing, by an act of our will. Thus, let any man try whether he can, by an act of his will, raise or suppress a passion or affection of his mind, as he can the motion of a limb; and he will find he cannot. On the contrary, inclinations and passions are found to haunt men when they are most vexatious and uneasy to them, so that they would gladly get rid of them, almost at any expence. Doubtless we are so framed, that upon the appearance of the object to

our

our senses, or in our imaginations, the SERM.
corresponding affection is excited in our III.

minds. And thus far, we do not find ourselves voluntary agents, but are really passive. We cannot, at pleasure, excite an affection; neither can we, at pleasure, dismiss it. If so, how then should any affection be the subject of a command; or how is it agreeable to the nature of things that this Author should exhort men to give him their hearts; or, which is just the same, give their hearts to wisdom, and the practice of virtue? This I shall endeavour, in the present discourse, very particularly to explain; and then shew the great advantages that follow upon such a surrender of the heart to wisdom, as is here required.

And first, as was said above, it must be owned, for it is to every man a matter of feeling, that we cannot, merely by an act of the will, regulate our affections, give our hearts to, or take them off from, any object. We find, indeed, that we can so order the motions of our limbs, and move them or keep them at rest, just as we will; but the heart and affections are not in this manner at command. Thus

we

SERM. we find, upon many occasions, that our

III. endeavours to excite a good affection, are not at all attended with immediate success, however earnest and strenuous: the mind, instead of being moved as we would have it, often appears immoveable: just so, when we would suppress a turbulent and unruly passion, our endeavours, perhaps, are so far from being immediately successful, that the passion seems rather to be exasperated by them.

But yet, notwithstanding this, we must not infer, that we are so unhappily framed, as to be incapable, by any endeavours, to regulate our affections aright. Were this the case, their being irregular, and tumultuous, and bad, would be our misfortune only, and not our fault; which no wise man will assert; for it saps all the foundations of morality and religion, at once. We therefore may lay it down as a principle, that the human nature is furnished like all other things, with all the necessary means of attaining its own perfection; and consequently, with the means of forming and directing the heart and affections aright; which is certainly the main thing. To say otherwise, would

be

be to say that God had dealt worse with SERM. mankind, than with any other order of III. life; and had placed the noblest work of his hand, in this world, in the most pitiable and helpless condition. But to clear this matter fully, we need only look into the frame and workings of our own minds.

Have we not met with many instances in which men have been greatly prejudiced against certain moral characters, and other objects; so as to have a very thorough aversion against them. These prejudices have arisen from mistake; and the aversions founded upon them have been unjust. And when we have reasoned with them, and convinced them of their errors, the aversion they had conceived has been quite removed. While they were under the power of such prejudice, they could not possibly command away that aversion; it is only the removal of the prejudice which puts an end to the aversion. In the same manner, men's mistaken fondness for certain objects, and characters, may be changed into a dislike, not by the application of any power to the affection, immediately, of which we have no idea; but by setting the object in a true light, which had appeared

SERM. peared to the mind in a false. Such then

III.

is really the constitution of our nature, that as the amiable and the excellent constitute the object of our esteem and love, the deformed and vile, the object of our aversion; so, when things appear to us in a false light, reason should interpose to correct our mistakes; and to give us such an estimation of things, as is agreeable to truth and nature. And surely, as we can by reasoning, and information, influence the hearts and affections of others, so we can by serious and continued attention, influence our own hearts. Have we not often found this so in experience? though we could not immediately discharge a passion, or a prejudice; yet have we not been able to reason it away? Have we not, by close attention and reasoning, set things in such a light to our minds, that affections which had obtained in them, and were wrong, have given way to such as truth and nature approved? He that knows nothing of this in experience, must needs be a very great stranger to the discipline of the heart.

No doubt, where affections are not originally in the heart, no endeavours of ours will

will raise them; and possibly, some men SERM.
are of so defective a composition, that they III.
are really without certain affections of
human nature; or, if they have them at
all, they have them not in such strength
as to appear; which is the same thing to
the purposes of human life, as being quite
without them. But, admitting this, in
some instances, to be undeniable fact, it
is no more than what we see verified in
similar instances. Thus, some men are so
void of a musical ear, that no instruction
or discipline can give it them: so also are
others, quite insensible of the beauties of
poetry and painting. Nay, some we find
so unfortunately circumstanced, that with
all the external parts and appearances of
the species, yet they have no understand-
ing, and are capable of no improvement.
But then we are not to form a judgment of
human nature from these præternatural
appearances: And where there are origi-
nal remediless defects, either in the un-
derstanding or affections, God knows how
to deal graciously with his own creatures.
Still however in general, as face answereth
to face, so doth the heart of man to man.
The human constitution, as to parts and fa-
culties,

SERM. culties, is much the same in all; though

III. in the degree of perfection there is an unspeakable variety. On the whole, it may be laid down as a general maxim, that by means of our rational powers, we have great influence upon our affections. Thus, if we are conscious to ourselves of being defective in esteem and love to an object every way worthy of it, nature will direct us, if we labour under unjust prejudices, to remove them, by reasoning with ourselves, and correcting the errors of the moral eye. But if that defect of esteem and love is owing to negligence and inattention, reason will direct us to view and converse with that object frequently and attentively, that what is lovely in it may strike our imaginations, and penetrate our hearts; for experience teaches, that presenting the object thus to the mind frequently and with attention, will excite an affection we felt not before; or render it, if it obtained to some degree before, much stronger. In the same manner, our unreasonable aversions arising from prejudice, may be worn off; and a careful application of our rational powers to that purpose will be successful.

To

To apply all this to the present subject. **SERM.**

III.

No man can resist the powerful attraction of wisdom in Solomon's sense of the word, that is to say, virtue; no man, I say, can resist it, who is not under the power of prejudice. It is certainly, in itself, a most lovely and desirable form. It is, at the same time, fruitful to us of the very greatest advantages both in this, and in the life to come. For the practice of it we were originally framed; and it is indeed our glory and happiness. Now, whence should our prejudices against it arise? Must they not, from wrong notions and biases in the mind? From darkness and ignorance in which we are bewildered; or from the prevailing of vicious affections? What then are men to do in this case, men that have, in general, a sense that they are wrong, and yet do not find they can immediately excite right affections in their hearts? Are they not to set themselves down, and think seriously? To reason with themselves upon the baseness of vicious affection, and the danger that attends it; upon the solid gain there is in true virtue and religion; upon the dignity and decency of a worthy and good

SERMON, life representing all these things to

III.  themselves in the strongest light, till wisdom enters into the heart; and with their own endeavours, in the application of their rational powers, joining fervent prayer to God, who is the fountain of light, for those communications that may help them to a right moral discernment; at the same time, setting themselves to make the experiment in practice, and trying whether wisdom's ways be not the ways of pleasantness and peace. Experience proves that such methods, pursued with diligence and persevered in, will quite alter the course of the affections, so that men shall love, and cordially embrace, what was before their aversion; and shall with disdain reject, and abominate what they before delighted in. The inmost soul, the heart will thus be changed; and one may venture to affirm, that the strongest prejudices against virtue, and in favour of vice, will give way to such application resolutely continued in. It is indeed true, that the most important principles of morality and religion may pass daily through the minds of men; they may understand them; they may be able to demonstrate

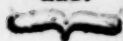
very

very clearly the truth of them ; they may know the divine perfections ; the measures of the divine administration ; the frame of human nature, and the obligations to religious obedience ; the final issues of life, in happiness to the upright and worthy ; and in misery, to the impenitent workers of iniquity ; and yet not at all be suitably affected. But there is a vast difference between cold speculations of this kind, and a close and serious attention frequently repeated. It is this latter that gives sacred truth possession of the heart. Meditating till men see, and till they feel ; for there is certainly a power in light to give life, in other words, to suppress vile affections, and to excite the contrary. And this I take to be the main thing incumbent upon us, as the means of changing the heart, and gaining the victory over ourselves.

S E R M.
III.

When we are required then to give our hearts to wisdom, we are not required to do any thing but what is plainly practicable by every man ; that is, to use the means which are proper, and which God and nature have afforded for raising good affections in the heart. And let any man,

SER M. conscious to himself that he has not those

III.  affections, and that he does not in his heart love virtue, but loves a licentious course of life ; let him, I say, examine himself, and he will undoubtedly find that he has not used the means, to which he has been directed, with application and constancy. Can he say that he has, often and seriously, meditated upon the principles of religion ? That he has given them full scope in his thoughts and imagination ? That he has from time to time, given due attention of mind to them ? That he has gone through the many important particulars which present themselves to consideration, with care ? That he has, often and fervently, called upon God for the illumination of his holy spirit ? That he has done all this with as great earnestness as he would pursue some favourite worldly interest, and that all proved ineffectual ? If this be in truth so, all the preceding arguments must be given up ; but if no such instance can be produced, they must stand in their full strength. Upon the whole there may be a conviction of the necessity of virtue to our happiness, in the understanding, while the heart is alienated

from

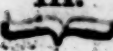
from it; but that alienation is a distemper which however deplorable, yet manifestly admits of remedy. So then it is not at all improper that we should be exhorted to give our hearts to wisdom. And the true way to attain this great point is, in the words of the author, that our eyes should observe the ways of wisdom.

SERM.

III.

What I have said concerning the admitting of wisdom into our hearts, as what may be reasonably the subject of a command, is justified by many passages in scripture; wherein the exercise of good affection is required as our duty. For example, we are commanded *to love the Lord with all our hearts, our soul, and strength; and to love our neighbours as ourselves; we are exhorted to rejoice with them that rejoice, to weep with them that weep; and to be tenderly affectioned one to another.* Now every one will see that the meaning of all this is not that we can excite, or rather create an affection that is not originally planted in our hearts; or that we can merely by an act of our wills excite any affection; but the plain meaning is this, that we should endeavour to set the objects of affection in such a light to the mind, that

SERMON. we should so attend to them, as is requi-

III.  fite, according to the frame of our nature,
to raise the good affections into exercise.

This is all that we are capable of doing;
and this properly done, certainly will be
successful. Which is all that needs to be
said for explaining the exhortation in the
text, *my son give me thy heart.*

I am now, in the second place, to lay
before you the great advantages that will
attend our doing so.

It will be evident to every one who
considers these things seriously, that true
religion has its seat in the heart, in the
inner man, as the scriptures often speak.
Indeed, it must be so; for true religion
consists in the love of God, and *charity* out
of a pure heart, out of a good conscience, and
faith unfeigned; in a word, it consists in
worthy and good affections and behaviour
towards God and our fellow creatures.
Hence it evidently appears, that if we do
not give our hearts to wisdom, we have
nothing that can be properly termed reli-
gion. External ritual services, performed
without good affections, are of no avail
to the ends of religion, nor can possibly
be accepted of God. Some bad things
avoid-

avoided, and some good things done, merely to still the clamours of natural conscience, will by no means do. These are

S E R M.
III.

far from that uniform submission to the will of God, which is the natural effect of a cordial choice; in pursuance of which, the powers of the mind are applied to the purposes of religion, with diligence and constancy; and this indeed is what only deserves the name of religion. In short, nothing else will avail, while the heart is not so under the power of good principles, as to exert a strong and cordial resolution of doing the will of God. Where this is the case, and men have set their hearts to the practice of virtue, they will find themselves in a state attended with great advantages: To enumerate all which far exceeds the compass of this discourse. I shall then, only take notice of two particulars; in the illustration of which the remaining part of the discourse shall be employed.

And first, men, by giving their hearts to wisdom, will find themselves prepared to do their duty, with ease and satisfaction; secondly, they will thus be sure of success. First, I say, men will find them-

SERMON. selves prepared to do their duty with ease

III. and satisfaction.

Every one is sensible that what he goes about with aversion, and reluctance, however in itself easy, is to him all burthen, all fatigue. Whereas when men engage in a service that has real difficulty in it, yet, when the heart is bent to it, and to serve the end designed by such service, difficulties, tho' very great, do not daunt them; they engage with vigour, and generally perform with success; but where there is a fluctuation in the mind, and the resolution not fixed; much more, where there is a dislike of the business in hand, and an aversion against it; then every difficulty becomes insurmountable. Thus it is in the common affairs of life; and thus it must be, especially in the affairs of religion; in which the internal dispositions are concerned, more than any external act. The truth is, one would imagine, in considering the excellency of virtue and religion; namely, how much the perfection of human nature, and our real happiness consist in it; how happily the faculties and powers of the mind are adapted to the practice of it; and what peace

and

and pleasure may be expected to attend SERM.
it; one, I say, in considering these things, III.
would imagine that the human heart
should, without any difficulty, consent to
the dictates of wisdom, and most stedfastly
cleave to it. However, it is found, in ma-
nifold instances, quite otherwise. Here
the flesh *lusteth against the spirit*, as the
spirit *against the flesh*; and these are contrary
the one to the other, so that men cannot do
the things they would. The inclinations
and desires of animal nature become strong
and irregular; *the lusts of the eye and of the
flesh, and the pride of life*, hurry men impe-
tuously, without deliberation, and with-
out light. By giving way to the exor-
bitancies of these, conscience is injured;
the moral state is depraved; and the wor-
thiest and best affections are suppressed.
So that when, by a continued licence in-
dulged to fleshly lusts, and a worldly spi-
rit, men get into bad habits, it is not to
be expressed what strength this gives to
irregular inclinations and desires; by the
constant prevalency of which the moral
powers are quite enfeebled; conscience is
robbed of that supremacy which, in the
constitution of nature, is evidently intend-
ed

SERM. ed for it; and, by degrees, the soul is brought

III. into the most ignoble of all bondage. This
 perverse cast of mind is seen sometimes to prevail, that not only good desires and dispositions are banished, but men seem even almost to have lost the original sense of good and evil.

Now, it is plain from this, that in proportion to the strength of vicious habits and affections, so will be the difficulty and reluctancy that men shall find, in attempting to reform their lives: And no wonder, in many characters, this should be exceeding great. For, in such the imagination is quite depraved; *the light that is in them is become darkness*; and the lusts to which they have subjected themselves reign over them with the most tyrannical sway. Still however, it must be owned that this difficulty does not arise, properly speaking, from nature, but from the perversion of it; and from a depravity of spirit that men have contracted. So that if it is possible to subdue this perversity and rescue nature from the unhappy servitude to sin; if it is possible to redeem the heart from the power of vicious affections

fections, then will the business of religion **SERM.**
go easily and successfully on. **III.**

But all this is undoubtedly possible; for it is known, in many instances, to be fact. And the means of effecting it have been, in the former part of this discourse, laid before you, namely, frequent communing with our own hearts; disjoining the false associations of ideas, which have led us astray; close and serious attention also to sacred truth, by which our prejudices may be removed; and, to sum up all, fervent prayer to the Father of lights, for his assistance, and the illumination of his holy spirit. When by these methods, a thorough conviction is worked upon the mind, of what we ought to do, when cordial and firm resolutions are formed, and the heart is now engaged on the side of virtue, then is the main point carried; and men enter into a war against sinful lusts with pleasing hope, because they do it with full purpose of soul.

Thus, in pursuance of an immediate application to the mortifying of evil dispositions, and subduing corrupt habits, the strength of both goes, by degrees, to decay; the moral powers exert themselves with

SERM. with vigour; men begin to relish the pure

III. joys of religion and virtue; and, by a diligent application and a resolved perseverance in well doing, all the influence and strength of habit goes over to the side of virtuous and good affections. Thus the practice of religion will become not only tolerable, not only easy, but indeed delightful. The mind becomes fixed in that temper which is proper and natural; it acts with freedom, with tranquillity, with assured hope.

The meaning however of all this, is not that, upon the surrender of the heart to wisdom, all difficulties are intirely removed at first; or indeed shall be, in any part of our course. The best men may have their several trials, of various sorts; and may have from within or from without, many things that molest them, and even endanger their integrity. As the present is not the state of perfection, so neither is it of uninterrupted ease and peace. But the meaning is this, that men may be so fixed in the ways of virtue, their course in general may be so uniform, their taste for sacred joy so formed and strengthened, and sinful lusts so weakened; that they are prepared

pared to go on in well doing, not only SERM.
III. without painful reluctance, but with joy and satisfaction. As this is indeed a matter of great importance; for the farther illustration of it, let a person of real worth, and in whom the pure and good affections have had long an ascendant, let such an one think how he could relish life, should he again run into the vicious practices of which he himself has been perhaps sometimes guilty; and with which he sees others every day pollute themselves, and take pleasure, nay, even glory in them; this person will certainly find his reluctance against vice so strong, that he could not only not enjoy himself in a wicked course of life; but that he would rather lose existence than sink into such a state. And it would be undoubtedly perceived, if a comparison could be exactly made, that the abhorrence of a good mind at vice, is far stronger than any reluctance of a bad mind against virtue. In truth, it must be so, because here good men have truth and nature upon their side; it is not prejudice, but nature itself that works. But tho' such a comparison cannot be exactly made, yet every ingenuous and good mind must be sensible of
such

SERM. such an abhorrence of gross vice, and of
 III. indignation against it; that he would not,
 for the world, be under the power of it. Now, this is a substantial proof that when the mind is in a proper state, virtue is the cordial choice and delight of it; and that all our difficulties arise from mistaken views, from prejudices, from that darkness and confusion of mind which is owing to corrupt affections; and that when these obstacles are removed, to be really good, will be the same as to be really happy. Would to God that this was impressed upon every of our minds, that righteousness is the very food of the soul; and that we were as really made for the practice of virtue, and delight in it, indeed far more so than for the enjoyment of any animal delights! This persuasion is of the utmost service: For the true reason why men of a licentious temper, and practice, do not care heartily to think of religion, or to attempt it in the strictness of it, the true reason, I say, is, that they imagine they cannot enjoy life in it: They cannot have pleasure, they cannot be happy and religious. I think there is nothing more demonstrably false than this; nor any thing

more

more true than that while the vicious are SERM.
seeking after the greatest happiness, they III.
wander quite out of the way to it.

There have prevailed, in some ages and nations of the world, principles and customs, under the notion of religion, that were indeed very unnatural and barbarous, and which the human heart in its best state and temper must abhor. For instance, human sacrifices were not uncommon; and men offered to their idols *the fruit of their bodies, for the sin of their souls.* Great lewdness also and impurity were hal- lowed as sacred rites in the service of the Gods. Again, other religious customs, so called, were very laborious and inconvenient, and, at the same time, egregiously trifling. And as religion was thus abused among the Gentiles, so even the religion of the Jews, tho' of divine authority, yet (which was owing to the particular circumstances of the times, and the genius of that people) it was in a great measure ritual; it was expensive and difficult, in- somuch that the Apostle Peter calls it a *yoke, which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear.* The apostle Paul likewise gives the Jewish ceremonial very degrading epithets,

SERM. epithets, when compared with the Christi-

III. an service. And indeed, from all these
 superstitions of the Heathen, from all the
 servitude of the Jews, the disciples of
 Christ are delivered. They are called to
 the obedience of the pure law of nature;
 to that reasonable service for which the
 powers and affections of the mind are
 originally adapted; they have the most
 ingenuous additional motives to this obe-
 dience, from the love of God and the
 cross of Christ; and they are encouraged,
 and invigorated, beyond all expression, by
 the assurances of a happy immortality,
 and of a Divine efficacious aid in the way
 to it. Surely then, our natural powers
 and affections, turned into their proper
 channel, and urged on with such assistances,
 must produce great effects. But this leads
 to the second thing proposed, namely, that
 when men have given their hearts to
 wisdom, they will be sure of success in
 the ways of it; sure of answering the
 purposes of human life, and of being hap-
 py, here and hereafter.

It is a declaration of wisdom *that she*
loves them that love her, and that *they who*
seek her early, in other words, that give her
 their

their hearts, *shall find her.* Our blessed SERMON Saviour also has assured us, *that they who* III.
hunger and thirst after righteousness, shall be
filled; that they who ask shall receive, they
who seek shall find, and to him who knocketh
it shall be opened. And it is the declared con-
stitution of his kingdom, that to *them*
who seek the Kingdom of God, in the first
place, all other things shall be added. No
man, therefore, has any reason to suspect
his success in the practice of religion,
who sets himself in good earnest to it.
For, the truth is, that according to the
very constitution of the human mind, and
the natural tendency of things, it is to be
expected, *that the path of the just shall be as*
the shining light, shining more and more unto
a perfect day.

It holds in the constitution of animal
life, that it is, in every species, happily
furnished with those powers and faculties,
which are necessary to its own preserva-
tion: This appears in numberless instances.
But still farther, when we look into the
interior springs of life, tho' these are in a
great measure mystery to us, yet there is
something seen, in the dependency and
connection of things, very remarkable.

SERM. Thus, from the heart, by a strong and

III. constant motion of that bowel, the blood is circulated through the whole body ; but from that very blood, which flows from the heart, there is a fluid derived, the nervous fluid, by which the power of the heart itself is maintained ; and it is perfectly known that when the course of that fluid is obstructed, the motion of the heart ceases : So that there is in the cause of animal life, a circulation of power, and a mutual dependency of parts. The heart supplies the blood to these vessels by which the secretion is performed that preserves, and maintains the power of the heart itself. Now, there is something in the moral constitution, and in the spiritual life, very analogous to this.

Good affections possessing the soul, push on the active powers to do that which is good : But in the very doing of this there is a relish of joy and pleasure, that still more engages the heart to virtue, and strengthens the good affections : So that the more men love virtue, the more they will practise it ; and the more they practise it, they will infallibly the more love it : And thus the love of virtue, and the practice

tice of it, have a strong mutual influence **SERM.**
upon each other : The love of it prepares **III.**
and excites to the practice ; the practice
increases and strengthens the love.

Hence it is plain, that our spiritual life, was intended to be progressive ; and it will certainly prove so, if men do not expose themselves, by their own unwatchfulness and fault, to what is a wound and injury to this life, and so an obstruction of its progress. Just as the animal life, preserved from hurtful accidents, and properly furnished with sustenance, grows up to its own perfection ; but is not certainly secured from what may obstruct that progress, and utterly destroy life itself. So also, there are principles and powers in the moral life, which tend to a glorious perfection ; yet this progression may many ways be obstructed ; and it is too often seen to be so ; but never without our own fault : For this is the peculiar happiness of the moral and religious life, that nothing can be fatal to, indeed that nothing can hurt it, but our own negligence or wilful folly.

SERMON IV.

The great fimilarity of the individuals in the constituent and moſt valuable parts of Human Nature; their wonderful diverſity in other circumſtances, with uſeful reflections ſuggeſted by this conſtitution.

PSALM 33 and 15.

He fashioneth their hearts alike :—

SERM. IV. **T**HE great ſubject of this Pſalm is the power and providence of the true God; who is celebrated as the ſole creator of the world, and as governing it by his counſel; for as *he ſpake, at firſt, and it was done; as he commanded, and it ſtood faſt; ſo he bringeth the counſel of the heathen to nought, he maketh the devices of*
the

The great similarity in human nature, &c.

85

the people of none effect ; but the counsel of **SERM.**
the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of **IV.**

his heart to all generations. The Lord looketh from heaven, he beholdeth all the children of men : From the place of his habitation, he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth ; he fashioneth their hearts alike, he considereth all their ways. In the course of his providence he preserveth the various species, from age to age ; He formeth the hearts of the individuals alike ; or he alike formeth their hearts ; that is, of one as well as of another. They all are the work of his own hand ; and they are formed with that likeness to one another, which is necessary to constitute them the same kind ; For as in water face answereth to face, so doth the heart of man to man. This is one strong proof of a providence, that in the human species, so also we see it in the several kinds of the animal creation, and in all classes of the vegetable world, in which there is a vast variety ; all the individuals of each species, (with an exception to a very few monstrous productions) are made after one fashion ; with all the parts and powers which constitute that kind, like one another, and very different from all other
G 3 *kinds.*

SERM. kinds. And so they have been preserv-
 IV. ed from the beginning of the creation,
 not one species lost, nor any material confusion introduced among them. Surely this cannot be the effect of chance ; which, in truth is a word, in this argument, of no meaning ; nor can this similarity be ascribed to necessity ; with which that variety which we also see in the works of nature, is utterly inconsistent ; and, therefore, it remaineth that we ascribe it to an intelligent power, acting steadily according to wise counsel and design.

The likeness of the human form, in the several individuals of the species, the same parts and members of the body, the same powers and faculties of the mind, such as understanding, will, memory, and affections, especially those of the moral kind ; this likeness, I say, in the several individuals, is what constituteth one kind, or species ; which yet is consistent with a very great diversity of the individuals from one another, by which each is distinguished ; having, to the essential powers which are common to all the species, certain things superadded, by which a manifest difference is made ; this diversity likewise,

is another very remarkable illustration of S E R M.
a providence, and to mankind extremely IV.
beneficial.

The intention of the present discourse is, in some obvious particulars, which yet are of great moment, to represent to you this amazing likeness or similarity in human nature; and, at the same time, the wonderful variety of things, partly natural, others of them adventitious, by which the individuals are diversified; and then to make some useful observations upon this subject.

To proceed, when we see a living creature in the human form, with the same erect stature, the same countenance, the same make of the body and limbs, with ourselves, we conclude that this is one of the same species. Yet shou'd we find upon inquiry, that this creature was without the powers of reason, without the affections of heart, without the moral powers, which we find in ourselves, we shou'd scarcely think it proper to call such a creature, man: For, what principally constitutes this species, is not the outward form, but the faculties and affections of the mind. In mankind, we expect to find

SERM. understanding, judgment, counsel, and de-

IV. sign, will, and choice in action ; we expect to find passions and affections, love, joy, sympathy, and the rest. We equally expect to find the moral powers, a sense of right and wrong, good and evil, and affections and determinations suitable to that sense. I mention the moral powers, amongst others, as an essential part of our frame, and as originally by our maker planted in us, because it is a very great mistake to imagine that our moral affections are the result of mere understanding, or reason, or judgment. In truth, the sense of good and evil, and the manner in which the heart is affected by it, seem to have no necessary connexion with these. Our ideas of honest and just, of virtuous and good, we have immediately from our maker, with all those feelings of the mind, which are produced by them ; they cannot be the result merely of our reasoning powers, more than any other simple ideas are. However, all these powers I have mentioned, joined together in one system, and combined in the same creature, may be termed essential to humanity ; and are found, more or less, in every individual.

Indeed,

Indeed, as some come into the world im-^{SERM.}
perfect, with respect to the external frame, ^{IV.}
or even monstrous; so, perhaps it is not

impossible, that there shou'd be, in some instances, such defects in the powers of the mind, and what may be called a monstrous production in that respect; but such singular exceptions are not of great account; as monstrous productions in the animal frame are not, when compared with the far greater multitudes of the species who are of the natural form. God hath therefore *fashioned our hearts alike*; with the same powers, the same affections and determinations, the same appetites and desires; and a most curious system they make, a very glorious frame! The Creator *hath made mankind a little lower than the angels, and crowned him with glory and honour*. But what ever excellency there may be in the original frame, you see it is, in the purpose of nature, common to all the individuals; a particular this, which ought to be much attended to; and which we shall afterwards have occasion to consider farther.

But yet, though *as in water face answereth to face, so doth the heart of man*

to

SERM. *to man*; all the individuals being made

IV. alike, so far as to have the same essential powers; yet there is a most amazing diversity among them, and in a great variety of instances: and a great deal of this diversity is the work of nature: We see it in the countenance, which is not alike exactly in any two persons; we may observe it too in the voice, and in other circumstances. But then, what an amazing diversity is found in the powers of the mind, in the temper and affections! Some men have excellent understanding, and sound judgment; others are weak and injudicious; some have great quickness of apprehension; others are slow and heavy; here and there men are met with, of prodigious strength of memory; others are extremely defective in that respect: So likewise, it manifestly is, with regard to the temper. Some appear to be naturally gentle, and meek, and good; others are perverse and froward; some are calm; others passionate; some proud and supercilious; others humble and obliging. And though culture, and discipline, may greatly mend a bad temper, and bad example and bad habits may greatly corrupt

rupt a good one; yet it is apparent that there is a strain which is natural; and a temper, which we may be said to bring into the world with us. SERM. IV.

As great a diversity there is observable in the affections; some are seen to have a very great sensibility, an uncommon tenderness and delicacy; others are hardly to be worked upon; they cannot form an idea how their neighbours are, to such a degree, affected by the joys or sorrows of life. And thus, according to the variety of the passions, various characters turn up to us, as one or other of them hath the ascendant. Very often too, the passion which hath the ascendant in the natural complexion, retains that ascendant, through the whole of life, and fixes a man's general character. So, for instance, one is under the power of *the lusts of the flesh*; another is in constant servitude to *those of the eye*; and others sacrifice all to *the pride of life*. This diversity, in many instances, may be, as hath been already hinted, ascribed to nature, to a strain which men are of, and a complexion they bring into the world with them.

But

SERM. But it is apparent that the temper and
 IV. affections are capable of being greatly
 altered, either to the better, or to the worse. What an amazing influence
 culture and discipline, especially religious discipline, seen to have upon men ! Once they become acquainted with themselves and know what is incumbent upon them as men ; once they are sensible of the sovereignty vested in conscience, and of the subordination in which all passions and affections ought to be kept to that sacred power ; when once they exercise themselves to maintain this government, and subordination in the heart, by a continued, resolved self-denial curbing irregular passions ; and on the contrary, endeavour to cherish and strengthen such as are weak in them ; then will they make great progress in correcting the temper and in regulating the passions aright : Nature is indeed capable of very high improvement by such discipline. On the other hand, how horribly may it be perverted by bad affections indulged, gratified without restraint, by bad habits men have contracted, and which have the most amazing influence, by a strength

aps equal to that of nature itself! In-SERM.
ed nature is often blamed for what is IV.
e mere effect of habit; thus men be-
ome strongly attached to things, and ex-
emely fond of them, to which no man
ver had a natural inclination at all: in-
ances of this are needless. Again, what
diversity of tincture do men take, from
e conversation to which they are accus-
med; from the business in life which
ey pursue; from the several stages of
e, from infancy to old age; and from
numerable other things by which the
mper is affected, and which become con-
spicuous in the character. But particu-
rly with respect to the moral character,
ough true worth is the same in all who
ve it, and though every man hath in
s own heart a standard of it; yet, of
ose who are good, what a diversity is
ere even in the degree of worth? what
diversity from the most eminent, to the
west character, which may be called a
orthy one? Besides, what a diversity in
ose who are good, with respect to the
articular virtues by which they are dis-
nguished? patience, for example, in one;
narity in another; ardent devotion in a
third;

SERM. third; and so in many other instances

IV. men's religion and worth, generally speaking, appearing much more eminent in some particulars, than in others, though they are in none essentially defective. But still farther, when we consider the multitudes in which there is such a strange mixture of good and evil, that the spectator hardly can pronounce the character in general, either good or bad; when we consider the infinite variety of humours and of men's peculiar way in doing things as well as of the strange mixture of principles which are manifest in their actions, time would fail one in describing all the diversity which, from these causes variously combin'd, is seen in mankind. To all which may be added the diversity of station assigned to them in this world wherein, from the beginning, there have been the rich and the poor, the high and low, the ruler and the subject, the honourable and the obscure, &c. and will be to the end of time. We must rest satisfied, at present, with just opening this spacious field to your view; for to trace out all the particulars, would be as unnecessary as endless. However, you see

upon

upon the whole, that as mankind are SERM.
formed alike, with respect to those pow- IV.

ers and affections which are essential to
human nature ; so there is an infinite di-
versity amongst the individuals, in many
other respects, and which are of very great
importance.

Having thus represented the state of
human nature as we now see it ; I pro-
ceed to make some observations upon it.

And first, it is plain that there is a very
great diversity amongst the individuals of
mankind, which is the work of nature ;
or, to speak more properly, of God. The
greater or lesser measure of natural abili-
ties, the excellency of some persons, in
one respect, and of some in another ; the
turn of the natural complexion and tem-
per, with the ascendancy of some parti-
cular passions in it ; a healthful or sickly
constitution, with many other particulars
in which we have no agency : All these
are, in some measure, fixed and deter-
mined in the providence of God, indepen-
dent of us. But yet when we consider
these natural advantages of some indivi-
duals, over others ; we shall find them of
but small account, when compared with
the

SERM. the privileges which are common to all

IV. the individuals of the species. Those

powers and faculties which are essential to humanity, such as understanding, voluntary action, the sense of good and evil and the powers of conscience, with those particular affections which, in a lesser or greater degree, are found in every one of the kind; those powers and faculties, I say, found in conjunction, make an excellent and lovely system; they make men capable of serving the great and common ends of human life; capable of being the subjects of God's moral government, of moral perfection, and of the high happiness which, in the nature of things, is connected with it. The advantages of superior degrees of wisdom, of strength or other qualities by which some are distinguished, are of little moment, when compared with those general endowments by which all are originally rendered capable of attaining to the declared ends of life. To be possessed of the powers of humanity is the great thing; however, in the various distribution of these, one person, in some particulars, may greatly excel another. Our state and endowment

as men, are so great and excellent, that all diversity of that kind is almost swallowed up, and lost in comparison. Let it be supposed, that a person is of understanding much inferior to others; of much less delicacy of imagination, and affection; labouring under great disadvantages with respect to constitution, parentage, and other things which are little, or not at all in our power; yet still this person is capable of labouring with success after moral perfection; capable of the happiness which is connected with it; capable of a most reputable appearance in the kingdom of God, and of the favour of his maker; capable, in a word, of the most valuable attainments, and in general, of the noblest state, which those who are distinguished by the very greatest abilities, can propose to themselves.

This is a most joyous thought. When God made us men, and members of his great moral family, he made us capable of, and put within our reach, the highest honour and bliss, which we can wish; far indeed, above what we can form any idea of: That is, he has so made us, that by a proper improvement of the faculties

SERM. with which we are furnished, we shall attain to them. Superior degrees of wisdom and ability, of natural goodness of temper, and the like, no doubt command proportionable degrees of esteem; but yet that which is the original foundation of all honour and esteem, must be of much greater value, than those degrees in which some are superior to others: In other words, what is essential to humanity, is of far greater value than any particular measure of endowments, by which one individual is distinguished from another. How great, how valuable are our endowments, and possessions, as we are men! and how does it become us to rejoice, in our common humanity! This will appear in a stronger light, when it is considered, that the highest degrees of glory to which we can attain, are much less connected with eminency in natural endowments, than with eminency in moral worth, in rectitude of spirit, in purity and goodness, in regularity, and true sanctity of life. For, we evidently see these are not the necessary attendants of distinguished natural abilities; but the result of religious discipline, and a careful improvement of the talents

H 2

duct

SERM. duct ourselves in an honourable manner,

IV. and the most remote from any thing mean and base: While, at the same time, it will make us pleased with our state as men, thankful to our Creator, satisfied with his administration, and will greatly tend to secure us from the pains of envy at those who are in superior stations, or have superior abilities; and from all disposition to murmur against him who for wise purposes, has appointed all such distinctions.

Secondly, once we are satisfied with the station we hold in the works of God, as men, as subjects of God's moral Kingdom, and members of his family; and are capable of looking with impartiality, upon that variety which he hath appointed in the state and lot of individuals, with respect to the measure of endowments, the station they hold in life, and the different cast of complexion and temper; we shall then see great wisdom, and strong characters of goodness, in this constitution. We are made, not for solitary, but for social life; and in such a state, this diversity serveth many excellent purposes. It produces a mutual dependence, and is the

cement

ement by which mankind, in their several associations, are united together into one body. For instance, if one is distinguished by wisdom, another by strength; wisdom will then direct that strength, by which, in return, it is itself defended. If some are formed for rule and government, others for subjection, and the lower offices of social life; these are mutually serviceable to one another. And so with mutual advantage *the rich and poor meet together, the Lord is the maker of them all.* There is a manifest usefulness to society, in such a diversity of station; the stations are suited to one another. The rich support the poor, by employing them in the necessary labours of life; the poor, by performing those necessary labours, support the rich; and in the present state of things, society could not subsist, without this difference of condition. So, again, the grave and facetious, in the natural cast of their tempers, the tender and delicate, with the hardy and less susceptible of impressions, make a mixture in life, which ministers both pleasure and profit. What would become of all the fearful, of those who are discomposed at the first alarm,

SERM. without the assistance of the brave and

IV. resolved ? how unhappy the effects of passion in some, without the meekness, the patience, and sweetness of temper which is found in others. Thus is the system, of which every one maketh a part, ordered with great wisdom. Certain necessary services for society require particular talents; certain men, accordingly, are endowed with these talents. And we see men succeed happily, in one business and station of life, who could have no success at all in another. What the Apostle Paul, 1 Cor. 12 Chap. in a very beautiful allegory teacheth concerning the christian church, may be applied to human society in general : It may be considered as the natural body, the various members of which have a necessary connexion with, and dependence upon one another : Some possess the place of eyes, others of hands, and of feet, and the like. Now, these serving for quite different purposes, yet in conjunction, make a beautiful and harmonious system : All are necessary, and the body could not subsist without such a variety of members. From which the Apostle justly infers, that no one ought to be dissatisfied

satisfied

satisfied with his own station, or desire SERM.
that of others. *If the foot shall say, because* IV.

I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? but now God hath set the members in the body every one as it hath pleased him; and if they were all one member where were the body? but now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again, the head to the foot, I have no need of you. Nay much more those members of the body which seem to be more feeble, are necessary. The sum is, that God hath formed a system, to the well being of which various services are necessary, and a variety of powers adapted to them: Every member is to be satisfied with the station and service allotted to him, and with the endowments suitable to it. And as no one is to murmur at his own station, so no one is to despise that of another. The great thing to be attended to by every man, is

SERM. to act his own part well. In this consist-

IV. eth his true dignity, and glory. And the
 supreme wisdom, which orders all, hath
 given every man an opportunity of advancing himself in true worth, and goodness; which is the most excellent endowment, not only of mankind, but of all intelligent beings whatsoever.

Thirdly, we may see from what hath been said, how our esteem of men ought to be regulated, and what are the just and natural measures of it. It has been observed that those powers and faculties which are essential to nature, and common to all mankind, as they are the foundation of every thing great and honourable, must therefore be of greater consideration than any superior degree of them by which one individual may be distinguished from another; much more are they to be esteemed above distinction of fortune, parentage, and station in the world; which may be termed accidental, and have very little relation to the true dignity of human nature. The Apostle Peter teacheth, that we should honour all men; honour them, as being men; and indeed, the wonderful frame of human nature

nature cannot be contemplated seri-
ously, without high admiration. No

SERM.
IV.

doubt, nature directs us to pay superior regard to such as are of very eminent abilities; but it is quite out of nature to pay such regard to them, as to forget that others are likewise men. And still much more unnatural is it to worship external state and splendour, or other accidental uncommon advantages; as if indeed human nature was mean without them, or as if persons destitute of them, were of some inferior species, and intitled to little or no honour at all. This certainly shews a narrowness of spirit, and understanding, which every ingenuous mind must abhor. Above all, how odious that kind of pride, which can treat human creatures as if they were brutes; nay often worse indeed; as many shew that unnatural fondness which makes a favourite animal the object of greater care and tenderness, than their fellow creatures of the same species.

It is true, indeed, that as real worth and virtue are the greatest glory and dignity of human nature, and lay a foundation for peculiar love and esteem; so, men who are destitute of it, and therefore

SERM. fore hardly deserve the name of men, will

IV. be but little regarded by those who judge aright; nay, when they appear not only destitute of true worth, but polluted with abominable crimes, which debase and defile nature; they must then, to the moral eye in a proper state, appear hateful. Whereas, on the contrary, when the powers and faculties of nature are hallowed by goodness of heart; when men, by religious discipline, are exalted to that state which is the most honourable and lovely of the human kind; to such persons the highest esteem is due, and the greatest love: And not to pay them great regard, be their external circumstances ever so low, is quite unnatural; and speaketh an unworthy undiscerning spirit. Surely men act most preposterously, when they overlook, or despise such characters; while yet they pay high honour to mere external appearance; to the accidental advantages of persons perhaps quite worthless: thus flattering a vain imagination, which takes the mere shadow for the substance; and disgracing nature, while they pretend to exalt and adorn it; and so doing great hurt to those who are the objects of this

idol-

idol-worship ; while at the same time, SERM.
they who pay it, incur the imputation of IV.
disingenuity ; or, at least, discover great
weakness.

Fourthly, let the consideration of our fellowship in one nature, and that God hath made our hearts alike, recommend to us sympathy, and tenderness for our fellow-creatures in distress. This is a most lovely affection of mind ; and of the greatest use in our present state, in which we every where meet with objects of compassion. Every one of us knows, in some instance or other, what grief of heart, what pain and distress are ; we know how agreeable the sympathy of a tender friend is, and how soothing. How hardly do we think of persons who have no bowels of mercy ! they appear undeserving of all claim to humanity, and a reproach to nature. Let us then learn, by what we expect from others, what we owe to them ; let us shew that human nature is, in no individual, beneath our sympathy, and kind offices, when it is in the power of our hand to minister relief. We shall always have pleasure in the sympathetic affection

SERMON. affection; nay the pain which attends it,

IV. hath something in it agreeable to the heart; and the tender and good services upon which it puts men, are pleasing in the performance, and ever highly pleasing upon reflection. Besides, what can equally recommend us to returns of love and pity from our neighbours, as a good and tender heart? What can so effectually secure to us the kindest offices, when we shall need them? He who shewed no compassion himself, is like to meet with little in the day of his calamity: while the kind and tender hearted, will be sure to find friends: Human nature indeed, must have put off humanity, before it can be otherwise. We are moreover sure that the exercise of this affection, with prudence and discretion, must be pleasing to our maker; who planted it in us, and intended it as a protection and refuge, for the unfortunate and the miserable. Many promises God hath made to the merciful and tender hearted; and no one but must consider it as a wise and natural, as well as a most engaging representation of the value of sympathy and charity

rity in the divine estimation; when, in SERM.
his account of his own procedure as judge **IV.**

at the last day, our Saviour mentions only

works of mercy, and charity, as the foundation upon which he receives the righteous; and the utter negligence of these compassionate offices, as that upon which he rejects and condemns the wicked. Who would not cultivate what, he is sure, will make him lovely in the divine eye; what indeed must do so, for it is an imitation of his own goodness? God doth not look upon the poor and afflicted with a negligent and indifferent eye; misfortune and calamity render no man less noticeable to him; he judgeth not as man often doth. He knows the value of his own creation; he knows what human nature is, stripped of all accidental advantages; the man, the good man, in any state, will be the object of his favour and delight. Let it then be our endeavour, to have our minds so formed, so attentive to what is truly worthy, so tender and compassionate to distressed worth; that they may, in this respect, be after the image of God, and bring forth fruits which are to his glory.

Let

SERM. Let us cultivate, with all care, those kind

IV. affections which he will take such an honourable notice of, at the great day.

SERMON

SERMON V.

Moral perfection, the highest end
and chief good of man, attainable
by all.

PSALM 33 and 15.

He fashioneth their hearts alike :—

IN a former discourse it was shewed you SERM.
in what respects the individuals of the V.
human kind are alike ; as also the sur-
prising diversity among them, with which
his likeness is consistent. And having
thus considered the state of human nature,
in these respects, we proceeded to make
some observations upon it ; which I shall
not now repeat, but go on to add some
others, which the time did not permit me
then to lay before you.

And the principal observation is this,
that seeing God hath fashioned the hearts
of

SERM. of all individuals of the human species,

V. alike; planting in each of them those

powers, faculties, and affections which are essential to such a nature or kind; we may hence infer, that he intended the same great end of life, or chief good, for all of them. These two, the chief end, and the chief good, are joined together, because, as we will see afterwards, they are, in nature, inseparably connected; and it is not possible that a being of infinite goodness should frame such a creature as man, for an ultimate end in life different from that creature's principal happiness; so as that he might pursue after, and at-

tain to that end, and yet not attain to the highest happiness he is made capable of.

This cannot be the case; such cannot be the workmanship of a being whose original and great design, in the making of such creatures, is the communication of perfection and blessedness.

Let us then, from the likeness of the human heart in all the individuals, learn that the main end of such a frame, and the chief good of such a creature, is the same in all of them. The sameness of natural and moral powers, the sameness

end and chief good of man, &c.

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of affections, the similitude of the capacities for action and enjoyment, very plainly speak this. As they are of one kind and make, the purpose they were made principally to serve, must be one and the same.

SERM.

V.

If we take a view of the inferior brutal orders, we will see that they are conducted to all the perfection, to all the happiness designed for them, by mere instinct. Without counsel or design, without any reflection upon what they were made for, without any reasoning with themselves, concerning the means necessary to be used for serving that end; without any thing of this kind, I say, they are, by the mere force of appetite and instinct, conducted to all that was intended for them. And this never fails of being the case, with every individual, unless some accidental cause arrests the progress of nature in them, or renders them incapable of serving the purposes of it. It is not so in man: There are various instincts planted in human nature, as in the brutes, and of great use in life; but they have not over the heart of man such a power, a necessitating power, one may call it, as

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I

they

SERM. they have in the inferior animal kinds.

V. The reason is obvious; namely, that man is a creature formed for acting from counsel and design, for directing his conduct by reason and judgment. And by these he is made capable of reflecting upon, of discerning what he was made for, and those methods in the conduct of life, which are proper for his attaining that end: So that man is to go on as a voluntary agent, acting from wise counsel and design, with an eye to the purpose which he is to serve.

But then one would think that the end which every individual was to serve in life, should be very clear to him; so obvious, that no man could miss of it; that it should appear in the strongest light, so that all who are capable of reflection might perfectly discern, and be fully satisfied concerning it: and that nothing could be more amazing, than that the chief end of human life should be the subject of disputation; and men divided in their sentiments concerning it: Better, surely, may it be said, that we had been conducted, as the inferior orders, by the mere force of irresistible instinct, than thus left to the dictates of reason, if that

is found to be insufficient. Now to this S E R M.
it is answered, that nature hath indeed V.
made this matter very clear ; and set it in
the strongest light. The powers which
God hath planted in us, the power of con-
science teaches it plainly ; so that no man
who followeth conscience, can possibly miss
the true end of life. Conscience sheweth
what is good, and what is evil ; what is
worthy, and what is unworthy of us ; con-
science checks us when we go astray ; ap-
plauds us when we do what is right ; sets
before us worth and integrity, as what we
ought, at any expence, to maintain ;
commands us to give up all things which
come into competition with them ; it
points out, therefore, moral perfection, as
the highest and noblest thing in human
life ; and bids us rest in this, and in the
joy which we are sensible does and will
attend it, as the very greatest thing we
can attain ; in other words, as our chief
good and chief end. There is no myste-
ry in all this ; every man who reflects
seriously, may perfectly discern it.

But when the purity and simplicity of
nature is lost, when the moral powers
are weakened, when conscience hath re-

SERMON. signed its supremacy, nay, perhaps, in a
 V. great measure lost its feeling, which is not
 seldom the case; when nature is lost to all
 order, and converted into a perfect ruin,
 by neglect and inattention, by the preva-
 lence of vile lusts and wicked courses of
 life; it is then no wonder at all, that *the*
light which is in men should become *dark-*
ness; and that they should wander and
 mistake in those matters which are the
 clearest and plainest. In truth, it is not
 subtle reasoning we want on this head;
 but a right heart, and natural feelings.
 For, not the man of the deepest penetra-
 tion, but he of the most candid and inge-
 nuous spirit, will best know what human
 life was intended for; that is, the chief
 end of it. But as some men seem to have
 mistaken this point; and many who, in
 theory or speculation, judge right con-
 cerning it, yet go wrong in their conduct;
 as being without that sentiment, without
 that feeling, of the truth, which should
 determine them; since such is the case, I
 say, it will not be unprofitable to enter
 into those reasonings concerning the great
 end and chief good of human life, to
 which nature directs us; and which, of all
 things,

things, the holy scriptures most inculcate; SERM.
all which reasonings will conduct us to V.
Solomon's conclusion, namely, that *to fear*
God, and keep his commandments, is the whole
of man.

Now to set this matter in a light as clear and affecting as I can, you will observe, that whatever is the chief good and the highest end of man, admitting the wisdom and goodness of our maker, must necessarily have the following characters; it must be what every individual, who sets himself in earnest to pursue after it, may hope to attain; it must be that for the sake of which all things, the enjoyment of which prove inconsistent with it, are to be given up; it must be that, in which the mind perfectly rests, and is satisfied; and finally, it must be stable and durable as the mind itself. Let us now inquire, what it is to which these characters do all agree.

For the first, that it is what every individual, who sets himself in earnest to pursue after it, may hope to attain; I say, who earnestly pursueth after it, for, as hath been already observed, we are to attain to the chief end of life, not by the

SERM. mere force of animal instinct, but by a
 V. voluntary application of our powers; by
 discipline, and a careful improvement of
 all those helps and advantages, natural
 or extraordinary, which the Creator hath
 furnished us with. As to this first cha-
 racter, I say, it is plain, that the chief good
 and principal end of human life must an-
 swer this description; because, if any in-
 dividuals are necessarily precluded from
 attaining to it, this cannot be the chief
 good of the kind: as in this respect, some
 men must be as different from others, as
 the brutal kinds are from men. And, in
 truth, no diversity of species can be great-
 er, than a diversity in the very end of be-
 ing: So that if all men have not the same
 chief end, they are not the same kind of
 creatures. But if they have all the same
 end, then surely it is what every indivi-
 dual may reasonably hope to obtain; and
 what no one can say he is absolutely cut
 off from.

If this be the case, you see evidently
 that some things which many pursue with
 the greatest eagerness, cannot be our chief
 good. Great riches, great authority, and
 power, elegance and refinement in the
 joys

joys of sense ; these things some men, according to their different tastes, set such a value upon, as to think life nothing without them, and, to all appearance, would as soon cease to be, as to live deprived of them. Now, surely, these cannot be the chief good of the species ; for the greatest part of the individuals have no opportunity of attaining to them ; they are in circumstances which cut them off from all hope. They have been, and always will be, in a state low and obscure, poor and depressed. And, as many never can attain them ; so no man can be sure, (I speak now of such as come into the world in a low estate) that by all the efforts in his power, he shall ever arrive at them. He may have great capacity, may use great industry and application, with the utmost perseverance in it, and yet all cannot insure him of success : From which it is plain, the Creator did not intend him for any such thing, as the end of his being : But this is so obvious, that it doth not need much illustration.

Secondly, the chief good and highest end of life, is that for the sake of which

SERM. all things inconsistent with it, are to be
 V. given up. This is the rule by which all
 men direct themselves in the pursuit of
 that, be what it will, which their hearts
 are set upon as their principal aim. So,
 the covetous are disposed to do any thing,
 to suffer any thing, by which their wealth
 may be increased. The man likewise who
 is a slave to the lusts of the flesh, will
 sacrifice all to the gratification of them.
 And what will not the ambitious do,
 what will they not suffer, for aggrandiz-
 ing and raising themselves to the highest
 stations? Now, this is as it should be,
 upon the supposition that the principal
 aim was right: Here indeed lies the error,
 and surely a most fatal one. But is there
 no way of being safely directed to that
 which is really the highest end; and for
 the sake of which, men are perfectly right
 in giving up all things inconsistent with
 it? No doubt there is, if we will but lis-
 ten to the suggestions of nature. That
 for instance, can never be the highest end
 which, in the coolest and most dispassio-
 nate temper, and when reason and na-
 ture are the most free and unbiaſſed, a
 man can be indifferent about. Now, we
 know

know that men very far from being rich SERM.
in this world, but having what is neces- V.
sary, are seen to be perfectly satisfied; 

and have no desires after more. We see them, in the most cool and dispassionate temper, and when reason seems to have its full force in them, preferring other things. So also it is, with respect to authority and high station: We see men who can be and are quite contented without these distinctions. Again, into what moderate bounds will hardy temperance bring the sensual pleasures and joys? So that men shall be quite easy, nay happy, in abstinence and self-denial, which to others would be a most intolerable yoke. But let it be tried, whether the mind in the cool dispassionate temper, seriously reflecting, and attending to the dictates of nature, can be quite indifferent as to a moral character, to virtue, to what is worthy, and decent, and fit in life, to the joys which spring from doing good, from the conscious approbation of the heart, and above all, from the approbation of our maker? Again, we see that what men have with the greatest eagerness pursued, in some stages of life, in others, they become

SERM. come quite indifferent to, or perhaps
V. conceive an aversion against it; so that
 what was once their idol, becometh now
 their abhorrence. But who ever felt in
 his mind such a change with respect to
 moral dignity and perfection; so that
 what was once the joy of his heart, above
 all other things, did afterwards, to his
 deliberate serious thoughts, appear worth-
 less, or a matter of indifferency? We can
 easily conceive a person, through the
 power of temptation, declining from the
 paths of virtue, and becoming corrupt
 and wicked; but, at the same time, it is
 certain that his serious reflecting thoughts
 condemn him: Nature, by an injured and
 accusing conscience, informs him that he
 is wrong; and he can have no stable peace
 or tranquillity, till he returns to the paths
 he had forsaken. Never can man, from
 a virtuous habit and state, suffer such a
 change as, in a deliberate, calm and se-
 rious temper, to become quite indifferent
 to virtue and moral worth; unless we
 should suppose him intirely lost to all
 sense of right and wrong; a thing hard-
 ly, if at all, possible. Farther, men are
 not only seen to become indifferent to

other

other pursuits, nay, to hate what their hearts have been formerly set upon; but

SERM.
V.

to be convinced of such folly and irregularity in those affections which before have governed them, as to suffer deep remorse, in reflecting upon the part they have acted; and the expence at which they have gratified the reigning passion: but where is the man who hath ever felt remorse for acting with temperance and purity, with righteousness and generosity, with compassion and tenderness, with a just zeal for God, and the cause of virtue? Or, who ever repented of the expence of self-denial or suffering, at which he steadily maintained a right moral character? On the contrary, are not reflections upon a past good life, the most joyous which can spring up in the heart; and still the more joyous, the more men have approved their integrity, in the severest tryals? Would any man, in a cool deliberate hour, exchange this heart-felt joy, for any pleasures of sense, any degree of wealth, any temporal honour or power, even the highest? No, assuredly; the wealth of the Indies, all the power of a Cæsar or Alexander, could it be offered in exchange, would

SIR & MRS. would be rejected. Nature rejoices in this

V! state, as incomparably the most excellent and worthy of all attainments. A wise man will give up his pleasures, his possessions, honours, every thing, rather than forfeit his integrity; but will never sacrifice his integrity to the purposes of pleasure or gain; for he cannot do it, without being sensible that it is against nature; and without being condemned of his own heart.

But for a farther illustration of this, let us see how we regard the conduct of others. When we see one man prostituting himself to an infamous vice, to gratify an outrageous passion; or when we see an eager desire, after any sensual or temporal enjoyment, to overbear all honourable sentiments and affections; so that truth and honour, generosity and tenderness, the love of ones friend and country, duty towards God, and every thing else, is sacrificed to it; or, if we see any man's heart so set upon any low acquisition and enjoyment, as to be perfectly indifferent to every thing truly valuable. Let us then set against this the character of a person, in whom virtue, in all its forms, appears

with

with lustre; in temperance, chastity, faith-
fulness, generosity, piety, and all other

S E R M.

V.

things which are lovely; when we likewise see the dignity of this character supported, at the expence of any suffering to which men can be obnoxious; so that, with an unshaken constancy of mind, they will endure any thing rather than violate conscience, and forfeit the approbation of God; I say, when we compare those two characters, is it possible we should be indifferent towards them? Doth not the latter command veneration and esteem? Is there not a most attractive dignity in it? Doth not the heart passionately wish to possess it, as the very perfection of human nature? Again, doth not the former appear deformed and hateful, vile and contemptible? What! a character in which sentiments of truth, honour, generosity, tenderness, piety, have no place! Can the heart ever be reconciled to it?

Thus, in moral perfection, we find that which is lovely, and excellent, that which is desirable for itself, and for the sake of which, all things inconsistent with the pursuit and attainment of it, are to be given up: nay, one may venture to assert, that

SERM. that there is in moral excellence what

V. dearer to an ingenuous mind, than its own existence. Let any man of ingenuity deliberately consider with himself, whether he could desire existence, perfectly void of all truth, honour, generosity, gratitude and piety; and full of the contrary vices. Or whether he would not, from this moment, rather cease to be, than to exist in such a wretched state? The heart will immediately resolve this question, and rise with indignation and abhorrence at the thought. With respect to particular actions, let an honest man say, whether, supposing it were put to his choice, that he should by a most perfidious villany betray his country, to its utter ruin; or in the moment of refusal should cease to be; let him say whether he would not most certainly choose annihilation, rather than be guilty of such an infamous crime. Continuance of being, with such guilt and infamy, he must surely regard as a curse, as an intolerable burthen. It is true, that no man can be put to such a choice; because men have only power to kill the body, but have no power at all over the soul; and we believe, upon very good reasons,

reasons, that what men lose, or suffer in SERM.
this life, for a good conscience, shall be V.
compensated in another world : Nor shall
any man serve our gracious supreme Lord
for nothing ; or suffer for him, so as to
be a final loser. Yet, at the same time,
it is certain, that if no future state or re-
tribution were to be expected, still the
case would be the same, with an ingenu-
ous mind. Were there no hereafter, but
that our very existence were to end with
life ; yet such men would give up life
itself, rather than contract such guilt, by
doing what is so infamous and base ; would
give up life deliberately, and with a most
perfect self-approbation. We see then,
that the human heart is so framed, that
virtue and moral perfection are dearer to
it, even than existence. And the very
first sentiment, which is indeed the voice
of sound nature, in every case where vir-
tue and other things stand in competition,
is, that these ought all to be given up ;
that virtue is to be retained at any ex-
pence ; that existence without it is not
worth holding ; much less still, in a con-
trary state, of all infamy and vice.

Thus

SERM.

V.

Thus we see that virtue, moral perfection, and those pure joys which attend it, springing from an approving heart, from a sense of the favour and approbation of our maker, and the hope of what he will bestow upon his servants, (for all these things are to go together in the present argument,) I say, we see that these are the highest attainments in our power, and for the sake of which, all other things are to be given up. So then, this happy state hath so far the character of the highest end, or of the chief good.

Thirdly, that which is the highest end, and chief good, must be that in which the mind rests perfectly satisfied; as having what gives full content; and than which nothing greater can be attain'd. Let us try, by appealing to our own hearts, whether any thing temporal and external, comes up to this character? We have Solomon's testimony to the negative; he he had tried all things; he was crowned with the highest honour; he had amazing wealth; he could exhaust every pleasure; he had extensive knowledge and learning: Yet, upon the whole, he pronounces all this to be, in one or other respect,

respect, vanity. And most certainly true it is, concerning all these things, however dazzling their distant appearance, that yet in possession, they yield far less than was expected. To this truth all men bear testimony: And tho', for a time, imagination may be intoxicated, yet when sober and cool reflection take place, men will at least clearly discern, that none of these things yield compleat bliss. Nay, very often, great abundance of them gives most fatiguing labour and trouble; in so much that the great, oppressed and perplexed, have been seen to make their retreat from them; and to court solitude and retirement, as a sanctuary, where they might enjoy themselves. Add to this, that whatever the mind fixes upon as the chief good; it cannot but constantly pursue after greater degrees of it. Nor is this to be looked upon as moral infirmity; but as a disposition necessarily arising from our very frame; and a disposition very fit for a creature capable of, and intended for, endless improvement and progress. Accordingly, where desire fixeth upon the proper, that is, the highest object, its being thus insatiable is not a fault, but an

SERM. amiable excellency. However, the fact

V. is no doubt so, that whatever men pursue as the chief good, they will never find themselves fully satisfied with the degree already possessed; but always aspire to a higher. Thus, the man of pleasure, the covetous, the ambitious; pleasure, wealth, and power, being their chief good, they are never contented with what they have in possession. Now, as in all such pursuits, moderation is necessary to true enjoyment; so men, when they exceed the bounds of moderation, suffer deeply by excess. This shews, that in these things wherein it is possible to exceed, the mind formed originally for going still on to farther degrees, cannot be perfectly satisfied. And indeed there is a sense of dignity and excellency, of the worthy and honourable, necessarily accompanying any object which makes a part of our supreme good; of which sensual and temporal enjoyments are destitute; and therefore, tho' they may be all which some corrupted and debased minds wish; yet they can never satisfy even them; how much less, him who can think freely and according to nature! Besides, how low would that

claims cha-

character appear to be, which could find SERM.
its compleat happiness, in riches, or pow- V.
er, or pleasure; or even in knowledge and
learning, abstracted from righteousness,
goodness, purity, faithfulness, piety, and
the other virtues of life! Or that man,
who had no taste for the joy which springs
from these, for the approbation which
followeth them from conscience, from the
world, and from God himself! While hu-
manity is not utterly destroyed; there will
be perceived in substantial virtue and
worth, something peculiarly excellent, a-
bove all things to be esteemed, and with-
out which human happiness is altogether
unattainable. This also is the source of
felicity to the orders of being above us:
Nay, is not eternal invariable rectitude
and goodness, the glory and the happiness
of God himself? Therefore, in whatever
consisting, his image and likeness upon
the human mind, must be attended with
enjoyment which is a resemblance, how-
ever faint, of his felicity, and consequent-
ly, must be of the highest and noblest
kind. In this the mind doth rest perfect-
ly satisfied; that is, in a state of moral
purity and goodness; a state of universal

SERM. rectitude and virtue, attended with a constant joy in the exercise of virtue, with a pleasing approbation of conscience, a sense of the favour of God, and most assured hope of all those blessings and favours from him which we are capable of, in the course of our future existence: And how great those favours are, who can tell? To be filled with all the fulness of God, is a thought which above all things satisfies our utmost wish! God himself is declared to be the portion of his servants: that inexhaustible fountain of all glory, all perfection, and happiness, is theirs, so far as they are capable of enjoying it. Here then is found a state, in which we know the mind must have such a plenitude of bliss, as will perfectly satisfy; being of the noblest kind, and in the highest degree, of which we have any idea: an happiness, in the enjoyment of which, as there will be no interruption, so no end; nor any thing to obstruct a progress in it, provided the mind itself is still capable of improvement; which most probably is the case, through every order of created intelligence. Were this matter to be determined by the experience of good men,

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even in this imperfect state, we should **SERM.**
undoubtedly find their minds sometimes **V.**
very much at rest, and satisfied. In this
self-satisfaction, from the testimony of their
consciences, in hope towards God, in a
sense of his presence and favour, they
have most solid joy; they know most as-
suredly, that they want no more to com-
pleat their bliss, than the perfection of
that moral state here begun; which per-
fection, with its consequences, is their
utmost aim, the highest object of their
desires. This is the rest and joy, which
can never be found in the pleasures, or
the pomps of this world, nor in any thing
but that one state, which as it is a sanc-
tuary from all distressing evil, so it is a
source of the noblest good.

Finally, the highest end and chief good
of human nature, must be that which is
stable like the mind itself; it cannot be
what may be interrupted, or intirely cut
off, by adversity, and misfortune, by sick-
ness, or disorder, or want of taste, by ful-
ness and satiety, by different turns or
stages of life, by old age, or lastly, by
death. Now, what can we name of things
external and temporal, what indeed but

SERM. true virtue, and the rewards of it, which
 V. is not subjected to these accidents; which,
 to the possessor, may render them all vanity and vexation of spirit? It is virtue, the favour of God, and that happiness which his moral government promises to the worthy, which alone is stable as the days of heaven, and as the unalterable measures of the divine administration.

So then, upon the whole, the highest end of human life, the chief good of human nature, consists in a state wherein virtue is perfected; in which the sacred and pure joys which spring from it, shall be unmixed; in which, according to the capacity of the mind, there will be an uninterrupted progressive, endless fruition, of the original infinite excellence and beauty! A state the most beautiful and honourable, the most exalted of which we can frame any idea! It is this state in which we have fellowship with the Angels of God in heaven; it is and must be their chief good, as well as ours. In this state we have communion with our Lord Jesus Christ; our glorious leader, who intended to bring us to this perfection and

hap-

happiness, by all he acted, by all he suf-
fered ! And finally, it is in this, that we
have fellowship with the father of lights,
from whom every good and perfect gift
doth descend ! This consummation of vir-
tue is the ultimate end of all the powers
and faculties which God hath given us ; of
all the privileges, and advantages of what-
ever kind, he hath conferred upon us as
men and christians ; and of all the disci-
pline in which we are trained up, and all
the providences of God towards us.

But, O miserable perversion of mind !
miserable darkness and prejudice ! by which
we are so much alienated from what is
our only solid glory, and solid bliss ! How
few, compared to the multitudes of man-
kind, how very few, who pursue after this
supreme good, as they are seen to do after
other things ! How eager and impatient
the desires, how impetuous, and earnest,
and persevering too, their endeavours af-
ter the fading glories of this world, after
the mammon of unrighteousness, after for-
did pleasure, and the means of attaining
it ! while immortal glory, durable riches,
and purest pleasures, are either quite ne-
glected ; or followed after with such cold-

SERM. nefs of desire, such indolence, as shew

V. they are, by no means, our highest aim, or felt as our chief good! What then is this owing to? not surely to want of knowledge; not to deficiency of argument to evince what is really our chief good; but to want of taste, want of the internal moral feelings; which how they are to be attained, I shall endeavour to shew, in laying before you some other observations upon this great argument, which shall be the subject of a distinct discourse.

In the mean time, let us attend to it, that He who framed our hearts alike, and gave us the same essential, especially, moral powers; intends us for the same ultimate end, and the same supreme good. It ought to be carefully attended to, that high and low, rich and poor, noble and ignoble, prosperous or afflicted, make no difference here. *He who made of one blood all nations to dwell upon the face of the earth, hath made all men for the same general purpose. Agreeably to this speaketh the Gospel; In Jesus Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, Barbarian nor Scythian, bond or free, servant or master, male or female, but all are one in Christ Jesus.* A most comfortable

comfortable and pleasing declaration ! Distinc-
tions of this kind, in the present state of
things, there always have been, and always
must be ; But, with respect to the main
ends of life, and the supreme good, no
such distinctions are admitted. How much
ought this to reconcile us to the constitu-
tion and administration we are under ?
The poor, the unfortunate, the unhealth-
ful, must feel ; and it is no wonder they
are disposed to complain ; and the rather,
that a low and unfortunate estate is very
apt to be despised, be their personal merit
in that state, what it will. Men are very
apt, in this respect as well as many others,
to judge after the outward appearance ;
and so to regulate their esteem. But,
notwithstanding this unrighteous measure,
how substantial the inward consolation,
from a sense that, in the lowest possible
circumstances, we are capable of serving
and attaining to the true ends of life !
This will be a most glorious distinction,
when all others are lost for ever ! To this
an ingenuous mind has recourse as the best
refuge and solace in all misfortunes ; and
having also the testimony of a good con-
science, can bear them with a most mag-
nanimous

SERM.
V.
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SERMON. unanimous patience. Put the case that

V. they who are poor and despised, and unfortunate, in this life, should be in like condition, with respect to the highest purposes of being; how melancholy must their state appear? and how unkind the supreme ruler? But on the contrary, so he hath provided, that we shall not miss of the greatest good which human nature is capable of, but by our own default. And this is so clear, from our very frame, and from frequent declarations in the holy scriptures, that there cannot be the least doubt of it. How gracious then our maker, the glorious parent and head of the numberless intellectual family? And how ought we to rejoice in being members of it! What are all temporal distinctions put together, when compared with true worth and the hope of heaven! How soon will all those outward distinctions be lost? Our fathers where are they? Where the generations before us, in all these respects, which are of a temporal kind? Where is now the pomp and glory of one of the greatest monarchs upon earth? All gone and lost for ever! The only distinction

end and chief good of man, &c.

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tion which remaineth, is true worth; **SERM.**
which is an everlasting crown, and the **V.**
most glorious possible, &c.

SERMON

SERMON VI.

The means by which the highest end and supreme good of human nature may be attained.

PSALM 33 and 15.

He fashioneth their hearts alike—

SERM.
VI.

WE have seen, in two former discourses upon these words, the general likeness of the individuals of the human kind, in all those powers and faculties which are essential to the species; and at the same time, the consistency of that likeness with a most surprising diversity amongst these individuals, with respect to things not essential; a diversity, which serveth very valuable purposes to human society; and is, in itself, beautiful, and pleasing to the contemplative mind. Some practical observations on this subject have also

Means by which the highest end, &c.

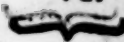
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So been pointed out; the principal of *SERMON*
which is this, that as men are formed *VI.*

like in those powers and principles which
are essential to human nature; so the great
end of life, the great purpose for which
the Creator formed such a kind, must be
the same in all. It was shewed you what
this end is, namely, moral perfection,
and the happiness which resulteth from
it to ourselves and others; it was also
very particularly explained how nature
and reason direct us to fix upon this, as
our highest end and supreme good; from
every frame of the heart, and the in-
ternal sensations of which every man who
attendeth must be conscious; and it was
observed that the same important truth is
most clearly set forth in the holy scriptures,
and above all other things inculcated.
Now, all this naturally leads us to con-
sider, by what means, and methods, this
highest end and supreme good of human
nature is to be obtained.

And here in the first place, we cannot
observe a wide difference between
mankind and all the other works of God,
in this World. To pass over all that
end of life, so called, which is found in
the

SER M. the various orders of vegetables ; which

VI.  a thing quite distinct from the power of action, and spontaneous motion, and which is wholly the efficacious energy of the power which maketh and governeth all. I say, to omit all this, we see in the bruta orders of every kind, that the individuals are conducted to all the perfection, the highest ends designed for them, by the mere force of instinct, and without counsel or design in them ; so that, if the course of nature is not accidentally interrupted, they never fail of attaining to their chief end. Quite otherwise is it with mankind ; who were made for acting from principle and counsel ; capable of proposing ends to themselves, and of choosing the means by which those ends are most effectually served ; who have also the powers of conscience and moral discernment planted in them ; thus seeing what is right and what is wrong, they are capable of either, and are plainly intended by the author of nature, to be the subjects of self-government and discipline. The consequence of such a frame is plain, that though no man can say it is impossible for him to attain the highest

of human nature may be attained.

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nd, and supreme good of life; yet he SERM.
noweth that it is, on the other hand, VI.

ery possible for him, by voluntary default,
miss of it; and in fact we see that
any do miss of it, and pursue such a
course of life as quite misleads them.

At the same time, it is certain, that as
the highest end and supreme good of life,
the same to all: so the way to it, or
the method of obtaining it, must be the
same in all. Not that all have the same
means and advantages given them, for
we see it is quite otherwise in fact; some
men have a much greater measure of natu-
ral abilities, than others; some again are
favoured with a divine revelation, above
others; and this is one of the greatest
advantages in the present state of things,
which can be imagined. The meaning
therefore is, that all must attain to the
chief good and highest end by the same
general methods of self-government, and
external discipline, as that which is in-
dispensibly required from all men.

And though, in the great diversity
found amongst mankind, with respect to
degrees of understanding and knowledge,
sagacity and foresight, some may be
found

SERMON. found, who, in the way of reasoning and

VI. speculation, can say but little concerning the relations and connections of things as affecting the true end of life, and the proper and certain means of attaining it. not perhaps having any clear ideas of such matters; yet these very persons, by following nature, and submitting their conduct to conscience and to the laws of God, shall take the very same method of conducting life, to which the clearest reason, and the most comprehensive view of things, direct others. Certainly this shews what a kind provision God hath made for us, in our very constitution: though we cannot perhaps penetrate deeply, or reason acutely, yet we shall be perfectly safe in following that sense of right which, in unprejudiced minds, is the plainest of all things. This therefore is the great thing, that whatever various degrees of knowledge men may have with respect to the relations and connections of things, or with respect to ends and means; yet the methods in life, those of discipline and self-government, by which the ends of it are obtained, must be the same in all. Some men, it is true, from

of human nature may be attained.

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advantages of a happy natural com-
union, from sweetness of temper, and

SERM.

VI.

ness of passion, need discipline much
than others; or may be so favoured by
divine communications, which we are af-
fected, hath been sometimes the case, as to
be raised much above the common rate of
mortals, and the common necessity of disci-
pline; yet still it is in some measure necessa-
ry to all, and must be of the same kind in all.
It will now, it is hoped, not be an un-
profitable or unprofitable entertainment to
our thoughts, to take the view we propos-
ed of that discipline and government by
which we attain our highest perfection;
and of the progress men naturally, by
the means of it, make towards that perfection.

Should a person always pursue the ten-
dency of that passion, or desire, which
happens to be at present uppermost, with-
out any consideration whether it be right
or wrong, or the course of action on which
it puts him, good or evil, profitable or
otherwise; such person, surely, would be
an utter stranger to all discipline, indeed
could hardly be called a rational agent;
for where men are directed and prompted
by desire or passion only, thus far, how

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are

SERMON. are they better, or how in a higher rank than the beasts of the field? But we have a power given us by our maker of resisting passion, of suspending the action to which desire prompteth us; we have power of considering, and a standard whereby to judge, whether any thing is right or wrong, whether expedient or inexpedient: Nay, we are so made, that it is not possible to preserve any peace and harmony in the mind, if certain passions are not restrained; if those which are of an inferior kind, are not subordinated and subjected, to such as are of an higher nature and more important. Thus it is we become the subjects of discipline, and are capable of acting from counsel, from principle and a sense of right; to say it in a word become capable of acting as men.

We therefore here find the first beginning of what is virtuous and praise-worthy; when we do not follow the solicitations of passion, or desire, universally; or do not follow them the full length at which they aim; but, before we proceed to action, call them to an account, in order to judge whether the present tendency of them is agreeable to reason, and

con-

of human nature may be attained.

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conscience ; and if it should not be found SERM.
so, then absolutely refusing to comply : VI.
laying this down as a maxim in conduct,
that no passion or desire, however impor-
tunate, shall be gratified, if reason and
conscience condemn it ; upon this prin-
ciple, resisting inclination in its greatest
height, with inflexible resolution and stea-
diness. Upon which occasions of prefer-
ring what is right and fit, to what is at
present desirable, and so of denying our-
selves, when we have acted our part a-
right ; we shall have a most pleasing sense
of honour, in the victory obtained over
ourselves, and of having pleased our ma-
ker ; whose intention and will it is, that
we should prefer what is right, to all other
considerations. But I need not enlarge
on this, every man of real worth must be
instructed in it, by his own experience.

In the same manner, when the mind
feels a present reluctance against what we
ought to do ; and what our hearts must
necessarily condemn us for neglecting ;
here likewise, virtue is proved, and the
strength of our sense of what is right, and
honourable. Against such reluctance we
are to strive with all our might ; and im-

L 2

mediately

SERM. immediately set about doing our duty, in
 VI. spight of ourselves, that is, of the present
 reluctance we feel. Thus making it our
 immoveable resolution in acting, or not
 acting, to approve ourselves to our own
 reflecting thoughts, to our consciences,
 however present inclination may be con-
 tradicted: For in such cases, passion and
 inclination were made to be controled;
 conscience and the sense of right, to have
 the dominion in our conduct.

But to proceed, the mind is so formed,
 that not only there is a power in it to sus-
 pend present action, to call passion and de-
 sire to account, and to resist them when
 irregular; but the very strength, or weak-
 ness, of the particular passions doth, in a
 great measure, depend upon the due ma-
 nagement of them. Who doth not know,
 who hath not observed, that the humours
 and passions of a child; by daily indulgence
 grow stronger and more ungovernable;
 and that by discipline and restraint, they
 become more modest, and governable?
 Just so it is through the whole of life;
 an habitual unrestrained indulgence of a
 passion, gives it a power which scarce ad-
 mits control; whereas, frequent exercise
 of

of self-denial, and refusing to gratify it, SERM.
weakens the very passion itself, and brings VI.
it into order. So that the more men use
themselves to deny the sollicitations of vehement desire, the more easy do they find it, to deny them; and a passion, which at first perhaps could not be resisted without the greatest pain and difficulty, becomes by degrees tame and submissive. However, this self-denial takes place, principally, in the passions of an inferior nature; as without such restraint, an honourable and worthy character can never be obtained. Generally speaking, the higher and more honourable desires, such as of knowledge and wisdom, but especially of moral perfection and those things which are above, are too weak and languid; in which case it is our duty, and the business of virtue, to strengthen and confirm them, in these two ways; first, by labouring to suppress the desires which are of an opposite nature and tendency; which are gross and earthly, depressing, as a dead weight, the nobler affections of the soul. And secondly, by presenting the excellent objects of the worthiest desires, very frequently to the mind; by setting them in

SERM. the fairest and most amiable light; re-

VI. moving, so far as we can, all prejudices
 against them, all false associations of ideas
 concerning them. Thus these desires will
 shoot up with vigour; and the mind, set
 free from prejudice and wrong biases, will
 be prepared, with cordial affection, to em-
 brace the glorious object. In this man-
 ner, as experience shews, we may greatly
 influence our desires and aversions with
 regard to our fellow-creatures, and other
 objects; such as even the manner of do-
 ing things, the mien, gesture and the like;
 so that what we have formerly unjustly
 admired, shall become our aversion; and
 what we have unreasonably disliked, shall
 become lovely and pleasing. Wonderful
 is the effect which frequent serious com-
 muning with our own hearts will have,
 in these respects; and that same discipline,
 and labour with ourselves, will not be in
 vain, in matters of the highest import-
 ance.

But then, it is supposed that a person
 who entereth into such a discipline, with
 a full purpose to answer the ends of it,
 will be constantly attentive to his own
 temper and conduct; that he will not on-

ly

of human nature may be attained.

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ly think, and deliberate seriously, before S E R M.
he acteth in any matter of importance, VI.

but that he will give room to conscience, the divine vicegerent in his bosom; to call his past actions, from time to time, to account; that he will with impartiality listen to its suggestions, be pleased with its commendation when he hath done right, more than with the applauses of all the world; and receiving meekly its rebukes, when, in any instance, he knoweth he hath done wrong. Upon which occasion, there ought to be a particular repentance for the fault; care should be taken to set it before the mind in all the aggravations of it, and to give way to ingenuous remorse, however painful, that so, a deep regret for what hath been done amiss, may beget caution for the future, with an utter abhorrence of what is evil, and a strong resolution of doing so no more. This is that repentance of a *Godly sort*, which needeth not to be repented of; which is the natural means of attaining to reformation of life; and without which indeed, little progress in virtue is to be expected.

L 4

Far-

SERM. Farther, when men persevering in such
VI. discipline, and supported by a divine aid,
(of which afterwards) when men, I say,
persevering in such discipline, have gone
on, avoiding evil with care, and doing
their duty to the best of their power; they
will, by degrees, contract habits which
are good, and which give great strength
to the worthy affections, and to consci-
ence. Every one knows the power of
habit: it is, in truth, very great, and just-
ly termed a second nature; it will make
things, at first very disagreeable, not only
cease to be so, but render them delight-
ful; it will so engage the mind, that men
cannot be easy out of the accustomed tra-
ces of thought and action; nay, it is
seen so to prevail, that men shall, insen-
sibly to themselves, do those things to
which they have been much and long ac-
customed: And we see it takes place, in
almost all things, and in all persons. Now
there are moral habits as well as others
and one would think that where they are
on the side of pure genuine nature, as un-
doubtedly they are in the practice of vir-
tue, there they should be the strongest
and have the greatest influence. God

men must know this from experience; SERM.
and thus by the mere power of habit, VI.
that of conscience is greatly strengthened;
the bad and corrupt principles lose
their force, and are more easily suppressed.

Let us now suppose a person to go on
thus, with the discipline of the heart,
under the direction of conscience, more
and more daily confirmed by good ha-
bits, proceeding, with great and constant
care, to correct what is amiss, and, with
that view, calling himself frequently to
account, and exercising sincere repentance
for every instance in which he hath of-
fended; suppose all this, I say, and you
see the tendency of such a course, to a
fixed love of virtue and delight in it; to
a regular exercise of the good affections,
to the utter suppression of bad ones; to
a stable conformity of heart and life to
the will of God; and to a relish for the
pleasures which are pure and spiritual,
above all others: in a word, the tenden-
cy of it is to that moral perfection, of
which every man hath an idea, and at
which he ought to aim, as the perfection
of

SERM. of his nature, and inseparably connected
 VI. with his supreme good.

Thus I have given you a short view of that discipline, and self-government, by which we may hope to attain to our highest end. Now a discourse upon this cannot be better concluded, than by setting before you the encouragement we have heartily to engage and persevere in such discipline. And here it is to be considered, in the first place, that this discipline is in common necessary to the children of men; it is the sole way by which we may attain to our supreme good. Some men will find it more painful and arduous than others, owing to a more unfortunate cast of natural complexion, to a more than common strength of the inferior passions, or to vicious habits unhappily contracted. But, though men of better natural tempers, and who have in a great measure escaped the snares of vice, may find this discipline easier, yet still it is, in some measure, necessary to all: it is, in a word, evidently appointed for the human race; which ought to reconcile and encourage us to it. The pains of self-government are not peculiar to us. The
 same

of human nature may be attained.

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same necessity is laid, and the same labours appointed for all. There is but one way in which all must walk, who mean to attain to the supreme good, and the highest end of life. The thousands, and ten thousands, now in possession of it, have all entered by the *strait gate*, and the *narrow way*. They have happily succeeded; and why may not we, having the same advantages, the same assistances, the very same prospects; having no worse enemies, nor more formidable difficulties before us, than they have overcome? Wherefore, seeing we are encompassed by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily be-sets us, and run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy set before him, endured the cross, and despised the shame. Who was himself in a state of discipline; for we are expressly taught, that he learned obedience by the things which he suffered. Let us remember, that in the moment we are complaining of the dangers around us, or of the pain we suffer from irregular passions, and the various temptations with which human

life

SERM.
VI.

SERM. life is beset; in that same moment, are

VI. thousands in the same condition. They have, if men of worth, the same conflicts in kind, with their own spirits; the same labours of discipline, the same pains in watching over, and guarding themselves. The state then in which we are, is common to all the children of God, and votaries of virtue; and are we to take it ill, that we are not, by a miracle exempted from the common lot? In short, that we find ourselves but men? And that, with respect to the supreme good of life, we are put upon a level with the rest of the species?

Let it be considered, in the second place, that the warfare of virtue is the most honourable of which we can frame any idea. He is a greater, a more honourable conqueror who overcometh himself, than he who conquereth a City. Many men have made a conquest of the one who were unable to subdue their own passions. Let us appeal to the experience and feeling of all who have tried it, do they ever appear to themselves in such dignity, as when, by the power of principle, and conscience, they have restrained vehement

desire

desire and inflamed passion, thus main-
taining their integrity in the time of great-
est trial? Do they ever appear to them-
selves so mean and dishonourable, as when
they have given way to them? How pure
the joy a man tastes in having acted a
worthy and honourable part! How great
the pain and shame, which attend a con-
sciousness of having acted otherwise! Then
indeed the crown, the most illustrious
glory, falleth from the head, when men
have sinned; for no glory is like that of
tried and approved integrity. This is the
sight which is pleasing to all judges of
worth; and which should command ve-
neration and esteem, in every circum-
stance: This raises that honour for a cha-
racter in the heart, which is more desir-
able than all the vain and empty homage
paid to external appearance, very consist-
ent with inward contempt. This it is
which makes us reputable in the eye of
those superior beings who, though invi-
sible, yet as the scriptures teach, are con-
versant amongst us. We come by true
worth, and aspiring after perfection, to
be of their kindred, by the bond of one
spirit. Above all, this it is which mak-
eth

SERM.

VI.

SERMON. eth us pleasing in the divine eye, and the

VI. *objects of his delight. To him, the true votaries of virtue, and who urge their way by religious discipline to the perfection of their natures, are the excellent of the earth; they shall be his, in the day when he maketh up his jewels; their names are written in heaven.* Do but consider, what a sense of honour merely is capable of effecting in men of generous spirits; how, for their friends, their relatives, their country, it will engage them in the hardest labour, in the greatest dangers; nay prepare them to devote themselves, to give up life itself, with a steady and most chearful resolution. And shall not a sense of the highest honour which can possibly crown human nature, animate us in the same manner! Shall the glory of being celebrated in the annals of this world, have a more powerful effect, than a sense of being great in the records of heaven! Do but think, in fine, what human nature is, when stripped of all virtue, and polluted with all vice; how deformed, how base, nay, what a nuisance it appears in the works of God. And surely, proportionable to this must be the glory of shining in the robes of in-

nocence

of human nature may be attained.

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cence and purity, in all the rich orna- **SERM.**

ments of true virtue! No state is so con-

VI. -

temptible and vile as the former; no state

reputable and glorious as the latter.

What would not an ingenuous mind give

it, if it might be purchased by any

temporal possessions? And he that hath

in possession, would he give it in ex-

change for all this world contains? This

state bears indeed, the image of the divi-

ty; and therefore must be the most shin-

ing glory of our frame. It is consequent-

of the utmost importance that a taste

of this should be cultivated; and that

we should frequently think of the high

unity which crowns a virtuous temper

of a good life; of the pure joy which

flows from it; that a sense of this ever

present to the mind, may strengthen its

purposes, and reconcile it to any

labour and suffering which are found in

moral discipline.

Thirdly, it is a very great encourage-

ment to engage in the practice of virtue

in true religion, that we shall have the

countenance and assistance; nature

teaches us to rely upon this; and the

scriptures encourage us, by many great

and

SER.M. and precious promises: God will give

VI. *holy Spirit to them who ask him; He will strengthen them by his might in the inner man. His grace shall be sufficient for them; and he will never leave nor forsake them.* The reasonableness of depending on divine aid in the arduous duties, and difficulties of life; and that we shall, in the practice of virtue, have his assistance, is a thing which the wisest among the antients have taught. Nay, one of the greatest and most knowing of them lays it down as a maxim admitting of no debate, that without divine afflatus, or inspiration, no man was ever truly great. And indeed, when we consider our absolute dependence on the supreme mind, for the preservation of our powers and faculties, and for the daily exercise of them, it will appear extremely absurd, to exclude that original power from any access to the human mind. To imagine that our Creator cannot assist us, in the exercise of the powers and faculties he hath given us. Our bodies, and souls, have their very subsistence in his power; and yet he can give us no immediate assistance, in the services he calls us to perform! this one would think

of human nature may be attained.

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cannot be believed. But if indeed, God SERM.
will be with us, and assist us, we cannot VI.
then fail of success in our endeavours to
serve the true ends of life ; and to attain
the supreme good of it : This is glorious
encouragement. Who would decline to
engage, when he knows that he hath God
and right nature on his side ?

Let it be added, that the higher we
advance towards moral perfection, still the
easier shall we find the road. Whatever
difficulties there may be in the practice
of virtue, they are always greatest at the
first setting out ; especially where corrupt
affections have grown strong by habitual
indulgence. But what are these difficul-
ties owing to ? not certainly to any thing
unnatural in virtue or religion ; not to
any thing in its nature, laborious and
painful ; on the contrary, it will always
prove true, that *the ways of wisdom are
pleasantness, and all her paths peace ; that
the commandments of God are not grievous.*
And in fact we see that there are unspeak-
ably greater labours, and sufferings, in the
paths of vice and folly, than in those of
strict virtue ; as the ruined constitutions,
characters, and fortunes, of thousands, do

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M

abun

SERM. abundantly demonstrate. But in reality,

VI.

those difficulties are almost all owing to a depraved and corrupted taste, to bad inclinations; and we very well know these may be rectified: We see that, in a thousand instances, they have been set to rights; and when this is once the case, all will be smooth and easy in a great measure, some extraordinary trials of life excepted. Are we not certain that a really good man would find the utmost reluctance in doing a criminal and base action? nay that there are some actions which one may say a person of a purified spirit could not possibly do? actions, in which, perhaps, for some time of his life he had pleasure? and what should this be owing to, but a higher sense of virtue than he had before? to what but a new and finer taste? When this is once attained, the difficulties of a truly religious life will, in a great measure, vanish; and the most chaste, and unmixed pleasures, will succeed them. This is certainly the case; and known from experience, so to be.

Lastly, there is in virtuous discipline, in keeping of the commands of God, a great and sure reward; a great reward even

of human nature may be attained.

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even in this world, a much greater in SERM.
the world to come. Here one might go VI.
through all the particular virtues, such
as temperance, and sobriety, goodwill,
meekness, humility and contentment, &c,
and shew that all of them tend to the
health of the animal frame, to the peace
and tranquillity of the mind, to the plea-
sure and happiness of social life; the very
same may likewise be affirmed of piety
to God, of the love of him as manifested
in religious services, and as a principle of
universal obedience. Nothing so much
tends to raise and elevate the mind, no-
thing so much to enlarge and invigorate
the heart. But who doth not know all
this? Who doth not confess it? The great
thing is to attend to it, to plant it deep
in the heart, as the root and principle of
virtuous action.

But if the reward of virtue is great even
in this life, how much greater will it be,
in the world to come! Where he who
both fashioned our hearts alike, and who
considereth all our ways, will make the fi-
nal distinction between his faithful ser-
vants, and the obstinately disobedient;
appointing unto the former, eternal life,

M 2

in

SER.M. in the most perfect and happy state! The
 VI. feeds and principles of which life are
 planted in this world, in that holiness and
 moral perfection, which is the necessary
 preparation for it. But I hasten through
 these obvious things, and will conclude
 this discourse with one observation upon
 the diversity of genius, temper, and ta-
 lents which is found among mankind;
 and which was particularly treated of at
 our entrance upon this subject.

Although God hath fashioned our hearts
alike, so that every individual naturally
 hath all those powers, and faculties, and
 affections which are essential to the spe-
 cies; yet in mens tempers, and abilities,
 there is apparent, a great diversity. This,
 as was shewed, hath a beauty in it, and
 is highly useful in social life; to the well-
 being of which, very different services
 and offices are required; as, to those ser-
 vices, very different talents are necessary.
 Different, for instance, are the talents re-
 quisite for counsel, from those required
 for happy execution: Different again,
 that strength of mind and courage, ne-
 cessary for some services, from the tender-
 ness and delicacy of affection which fit
 men

of human nature may be attained.

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men for others. So also the various en-
dowments of the mind, fit men for the
finer offices; strength and agility of body,
for the more laborious. Now, nothing
can be more happy for the individuals,
nothing more profitable for society, than
that each member should be applied to
those services for which nature hath most
fitted him; and that he should apply him-
self to cultivate those powers, by which
he is naturally distinguished. If men are
so happy as to be put into, or to choose
for themselves, this course, hardly can
they miscarry, or not prove eminently
useful; provided they apply themselves
to their proper business, with diligence.
On the contrary, it is seen, when men go,
or are thrown out of that course to which
nature directs them, they rarely have much
enjoyment themselves, or are of eminent
service to the public. A very few there
are, perhaps, so eminently endowed in all
respects, that it would be hard to point
out to them a business in life, in which
they would not succeed; still, of far the
greater part it will be found, that different
men are fitted for different services or of-
fices; and that eminent success chiefly

SERM.

VI.

SERM. depends on the proper application of their
VI. various powers. A person may be well
fitted for the contemplative life, who is
no way qualified for the active : one may
be fit for execution, who is but ill quali-
fied for counsel. The fire and vigour of
youth are suited for some services ; the
gravity, experience, and coolness of age,
for others. Now, all this we may apply
also to matters of morality and religion ;
and may avail ourselves of the observa-
tion, to find out in what manner of appli-
cation we may be most eminent in virtue.
There is certainly a natural cast of tem-
per, and qualities, which ought to be at-
tended to in our religious discipline ; and
we ought to take those methods which
are most likely to raise us to eminence in
it. The love of God, and of mankind,
which are the great vitals of religion,
though the same in all ; yet still particu-
lar men, by the natural diversity of tem-
per and talents, are formed for eminence
in some particular virtues, more than o-
thers. Some have originally a great ten-
derness of spirit, delicacy of affection, and
benevolence of heart ; now when true
religion is grafted upon such a temper, it
cannot

of human nature may be attained.

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cannot fail of being eminently fruitful **SERM.**
in works of charity ; and wisdom will **VI.**
direct men to fall in with, and improve
the natural turn, as the shortest and fastest road to attain the highest perfection in those particular virtues, to which it points. Again, if there is an active turn of spirit, attended with hardy resolution, and patience of labour, and of suffering ; let this be hallowed by good principles, and the spirit of christianity ; it will make a most manly and heroic appearance in the day of trial, or when arduous labours are to be engaged in. And as this is the proper province for such persons to be distinguished in ; so on such occasions, they have a peculiar call to exert their talents, by engaging in such difficult services, as others are less qualified for. So likewise, the turn to contemplation hath its proper province in matters of religion, as well as in common life : Here, by parity of reason, men are like to become most eminent in virtue, and most useful members of the body of Christ, by cultivating chiefly that particular turn of genius which is natural to them. Indeed, a finished moral character cannot be essen-

SERM. depends on the proper application of their
VI. various powers. A person may be well
fitted for the contemplative life, who is
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youth are suited for some services; the
gravity, experience, and coolness of age,
for others. Now, all this we may apply
also to matters of morality and religion;
and may avail ourselves of the observa-
tion, to find out in what manner of appli-
cation we may be most eminent in virtue.
There is certainly a natural cast of tem-
per, and qualities, which ought to be at-
tended to in our religious discipline; and
we ought to take those methods which
are most likely to raise us to eminence in
it. The love of God, and of mankind,
which are the great vitals of religion,
though the same in all; yet still particu-
lar men, by the natural diversity of tem-
per and talents, are formed for eminence
in some particular virtues, more than o-
thers. Some have originally a great ten-
derness of spirit, delicacy of affection, and
benevolence of heart; now when true
religion is grafted upon such a temper, it
cannot

of human nature may be attained.

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cannot fail of being eminently fruitful SERM.
in works of charity ; and wisdom will VI.
direct men to fall in with, and improve
the natural turn, as the shortest and fastest
road to attain the highest perfection
in those particular virtues, to which it
points. Again, if there is an active turn
of spirit, attended with hardy resolution,
and patience of labour, and of suffering ;
let this be hallowed by good principles,
and the spirit of christianity ; it will make
a most manly and heroic appearance in
the day of trial, or when arduous labours
are to be engaged in. And as this is the
proper province for such persons to be
distinguished in ; so on such occasions,
they have a peculiar call to exert their
talents, by engaging in such difficult ser-
vices, as others are less qualified for. So
likewise, the turn to contemplation hath
its proper province in matters of religion,
as well as in common life : Here, by pa-
rity of reason, men are like to become
most eminent in virtue, and most useful
members of the body of Christ, by culti-
vating chiefly that particular turn of ge-
nius which is natural to them. Indeed,
a finished moral character cannot be essen-

SERMON, tially defective in any respect; and an
 VI. integrity, or intireness of character, is
 declared necessary to our acceptance with
 God; still however, and consistently with
 this, there may be a much higher emi-
 nence in some particular virtues, than in
 others; as undoubtedly, the way to that
 eminence is to cherish nature in its par-
 ticular tendencies; which at the same
 time, will tend to help us on in other
 respects; as, in nature, there is a con-
 nexion among the virtues which consti-
 tute a good character; so that our excel-
 ling in one instance, contributes necessa-
 rily to our progress in others. &c.

SERMON

SERMON VII.

What is imported in glorifying God,
and in what sense the glory of
God is to be the end of our ac-
tions.

I CORINTH. X. 31.

*Whether therefore you eat or drink, or what-
soever you do, do all to the glory of God.*

THERE is nothing in which men
need clearer ideas than in matters
religion; nor any thing in which the
understandings of men have been more
confounded, for want of precision. And
this confusion has not only had an un-
happy influence in perplexing the mind,
in embarrassing it's searches after truth;
it has also, in many instances, greatly
affected men with respect to the conduct of
life;

SERM.
VII.

SERM. life; and led them into practices, unde

VII. the notion of religion, which have been
 very absurd and pernicious. Nothing
 more evident than that we can have no
 knowledge, where we have no ideas: and
 also, that we cannot have certainty, where
 we have not clear ideas. Accordingly, no
 man will pretend to know, where he
 has no ideas, so it would be very happy
 for the world, if no man would profess
 to believe, or imagined he did believe
 where he neither has, nor can have any
 It must be, therefore, of great service
 religion, so far as the practice of it is con-
 cerned, to think clearly, and to give dili-
 gence to acquire distinct apprehensions
 in matters in which we may attain to
 them. And as to that sort of phraseology
 which is often used without any meaning
 and wherein we really perhaps can have
 none, we need be in no pain about it
 for, surely, it cannot hurt us to lay it
 aside.

I shall endeavour, in this discourse, to
 explain what is properly meant by glorify-
 ing God; a point in which, possibly, many
 may be at a loss. For though the
 expression, when understood in a narrow
 sense, is

ense, tends to suggest some of the most generous and worthy sentiments, that can possess the heart; yet we do not unfrequently meet with instances, in which men seem to have very crude and undigested, indeed, very absurd notions concerning it.

The Apostle, in the text, directs us *whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, to do all to the glory of God.* He instructs us that this ought to be our constant aim, the end of all our actions: And also that, with a view to this, we should deny ourselves the liberty of doing things which, tho' they are lawful and innocent, may, in certain circumstances be inexpedient, particularly, as they may be an offence to our neighbours; that is, as our example, while we do things we are convinced are lawful, may be a temptation to him to do the same things, tho' he thinks them unlawful; or, at least, has a doubt concerning them in his mind. This argument the Apostle largely treats of, in this context: And we see the precept in my text, is the conclusion of the whole; *wherefore, whatsoever you do, whether you eat or drink, do all to the glory*

SERM. *glory of God ; giving none offence, neither*

VII. *to the Jew or Gentile, or to the Church of*
 ~~~~~ *God.*

First then I shall endeavour, in this discourse, to shew what we are to understand by our glorifying God, or doing all things to his glory.

Secondly, shall consider, in what sense the glory of God is to be the end of our actions.

First, what are we to understand by glorifying God ? a phrase which occurs very often in the holy scriptures ; and will much assist our inquiries into the true meaning of it, to consider the various subjects, characters, and actions, to which it is applied.

But before we enter upon this, it may by way of introduction, be observed, that surely no man can imagine, that we can by any action of ours, render the supreme Being more glorious or more happy, than he necessarily and eternally is : He cannot be more perfect, he cannot be more blessed.

Consequently, in the second place, the glory of God, with respect to his works, and as it may be affected by intellectual

and moral agents, cannot consist in his receiving from them, but in communicating to them. SERM. VII.

It is this only that is worthy of God, and which is indeed his glory. From him all creatures have derived being, with whatsoever powers and faculties they possess, and whatever happiness they enjoy : These things admit of no dispute.

Thirdly, we cannot but acknowledge that this phrase of glorifying God, includes in it something that is our duty to him, as the most excellent and glorious of all beings ; to whom we are indebted for all that we enjoy now, or hope hereafter. Our declaring God's glory, as it is often expressed by divines, consists in celebrating it in our praises, and shewing our sense of it in our lives ; of which I shall have opportunity to discourse more particularly afterwards. But then, it would be very unworthy of God, to imagine that our sense of his high perfections, and glory, and the praises we ascribe to him, are to him of any real importance ; or that this should be enjoined in the strongest terms, by divine authority, as the end of all our actions ; as if God had delight merely in being



**SERMON** being celebrated by us. To delight in  
**VII.** applause, only for the sake of applause, is  
 infinitely too low for divinity. And, alas,  
 how little of God comparatively, do we  
 understand? How little of his glory do  
 we see? Incomprehensible by the very  
 highest orders of created being, how small  
 a portion of it can mortals comprehend?  
 How insignificant to him their worship  
 and praises? surely, as their neglect of  
 God can do him no injury, so he is not in  
 any wise, dependent upon their homage.  
 But yet, in the last place, it must be  
 utterly unnatural for creatures endowed  
 with understanding, made capable of see-  
 ing *the invisible things of God from the Crea-  
 tion of the World*, of discovering *his eternal  
 power and Godhead*, and those high per-  
 fections that are every where displayed in  
 his works; it would be utterly unnatural  
 for them, I say, to neglect this most glori-  
 ous Being, the God of the whole world; the  
 parent of their spirits, and of all good, their  
 constant benefactor, the standard of all mo-  
 ral perfection, and therefore to all moral a-  
 gents, the perfect pattern of their imita-  
 tion. It is not possible that men should  
 seriously contemplate his glory, but that  
 adm-

admiration, love, gratitude, and a sense of obligation to imitate, should spring up in their hearts; which affections are fitly expressed in worship, praise, and obedience.

But now, to proceed to what is principally intended, I shall lay before you such passages of scripture, as may give us a full view of the use of this phrase, glorifying God, as applied in a variety of particulars; and then, make some observations upon the true sense and meaning of it.

And first, God is said to be glorified, where he himself, in his works, displays his sovereign power, or other perfections. Thus he says concerning Pharaoh, *Exod. 9. 16; And in very deed, for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.* In like manner we read *14 ch. v. 4* of his getting to himself honour upon Pharaoh, and his host, when they should be overthrown in the red sea. The meaning of this is plainly, that his sovereign authority and irresistible might should be made known. So also in the case of Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron,

SERMON. Aaron, when God had animadverted upon

**VII.** on their impious rashness in the most awful manner, he says *Lev. 10. 3. I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people will I be glorified.* In the same sense God is glorified, by the manifestation of his wisdom and goodness. Thus in the 44th of Isaiah, verse 23d. *Sing O ye heavens for the Lord hath done it; shout ye lower parts of the earth; break forth into singing ye mountains, O forest and every tree therein; for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob and glorified himself in Israel!* And 6 and 3. *And one cried unto another saying, holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory.* And we are taught in the 19th Psalm, that the heavens declare the glory of God. From these, and almost innumerable other passages which might be mentioned, it appears, that God is said to glorify himself, and to be glorified in his works, when the high perfections of his nature are manifested in them.

Agreeably to this way of speaking, intelligent creatures are said to glorify him when they do what manifests the sense of his perfections, and when the

do honour to their maker. Thus, in all SERM.  
acts of faith, of worship, and obedience, VII.  
we glorify God.

We glorify God when we do what demonstrates a stedfast dependence upon him, as a being infinitely powerful and wise and good, and fit to be the object of our trust. *Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify me.* *Psa. 50. 15.* And *1 Pet. 4. 16.* *Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf: As if he had said, Let him act, with an undaunted heart and a cheerful countenance, as one that does espouse the cause of distressed virtue; and let him suffer for it, confident that he is acting a wise and prudent, as well as a dutiful part; and depending upon the God whom he serves, for an abundant reward.* You find this argument pursued a considerable length, and with great elegance, in the 113th Psalm, where the author shews the vanity of idols; and calls upon men to trust only in the Lord, *who made Heaven and Earth. Their idols are silver and gold; the work of mens hands; they have mouths, but they speak not, eyes have they*



SERM. *but they see not, they have ears but they hear*  
 VII. *not, noses have they but they smell not, hands*  
*and feet but handle not nor walk, neither speak*  
*they through their throat; they that make*  
*them are like unto them, and so is every one*  
*that trusteth in them; O house of Aaron trust*  
*in the Lord, he is their help and their shield.*  
 And indeed, the sense we have of divine power and perfection, is never expressed in stronger characters, or more affectingly, than when in the day of evil or calamity, or in the approaches of danger, we do, with easy and quiet minds, rely upon God; maintaining a firm confidence in him, amidst the most threatening appearances. In general, any act by which we manifest a sense and persuasion of any of the divine perfections, does so far honour to God. Thus you see in the case of Achan in the History of Joshua, ch. 7. 19; when by the sacred lot he was fixed upon as the person that had transgressed the law of God, Joshua says to him, *My son, I pray thee give glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession to him, and tell me now what thou hast done, hide it not from me:* meaning, that he should, by an open confession, glorify that Being who sees in

secret

secret, and from whose eye nothing can be concealed. SERM.  
VII.

But further, in all the homage and worship we pay our Creator, we are said to glorify God; *whoso offereth praise glorifieth me.* We glorify him when we solemnly ascribe honour and glory to him. The scriptures, you know, are full of this; it is a very important part of our worship, and the most natural expression imaginable of our sense of the divine glory and perfection.

But there is still another method by which we glorify God, in the most substantial manner; namely, submitting to, and obeying him. John 15. 8. *Herein is my Father glorified that you bear much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples.* And 17. 4, our Lord, in his solemn prayer to the Father, says, *I have glorified thee on earth, I have finished the work thou gavest me to do.* To this purpose also our Lord speaks, concerning the glory to the divine Being that should arise from the good works of his disciples; *let your light so shine before men, that others seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in Heaven.* And the Apostle Paul in 1 Cor. ch. 6. after he had strictly prohibited

S E R M. the pollutions of the flesh, and enjoined

**VII.** purity of behaviour, adds, *therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's*; meaning, that by maintaining our purity we do honour to God. And Rev. 15. 4. *Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name, for thou only art holy.* And so in 1 Pet. 4. 11. *If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth; that God in all things may be glorified.* But it is not necessary to mention the many other passages to this purpose: For it is plain that, in the scripture style, we are said to glorify God, when in our conduct we shew an humble and submissive regard to him; and imitate his glorious perfections; God is likewise said to be glorified by the observations that others make of this; while they do honour to the God of Christians; and from the purity and goodness of their lives, infer the purity and goodness of the Being they worship.

Upon the whole, we see, that as the essential glory of God consists in the unchangeable perfections of his nature, his power and wisdom and goodness; so he is

said

said to glorify himself, when he manifests S E N M. these perfections to the intelligent world: **VII.**

And his creatures are said to glorify him, when they do honour to him as a Being of such perfections, in their faith, worship, and obedience; which are the proper expressions of the sense they have of the glory of God.

It may be added, for the fuller explanation of the phrase of glorifying God, especially as used in the Old Testament, that the Jews to whom God revealed himself, were encompassed with nations that worshipped idols; deities that were the creatures of superstitious imagination; many of whom were supposed to be impure, and cruel; and in the worship offered to them, rites most barbarous, and most abominable, were used; such idolatrous worship therefore must be supposed to have had an unhappy and pernicious influence upon the morals of men. Now the great end of the Jewish religion was to make known to men the true God; and to establish it as a fundamental in religion, that there is but one God. Accordingly, through the whole Mosaic dispensation, and indeed through the whole of the Old Testament,



SERM. particular care is taken to guard the wor-  
VII. shippers of the true God from all kinds of  
idolatry, and to shew a jealousy of the  
least approaches to it; and we find that  
the power and holiness of God are often  
insisted on, in opposition to the impotent  
and impure Deities of the heathens:  
Which argument is pursued particularly  
by the Prophet Isaiah, in the 44th and  
other chapters of his prophecy; where he  
does, with most severe raillery, expose the  
vanity and folly of men who worshipped  
idols; and calls upon mankind to return  
to the worship of that God, who made all  
things, who declares the end from the be-  
ginning, who governs the world with ab-  
solute sway, and who has infinite power  
and goodness, to hear and help his votaries.  
Nor is this argument only prosecuted in the  
Old Testament, in a very particular manner,  
and with great strength of reason, as of  
the greatest importance; but it is also not  
improbable that it was one, perhaps the  
principal, end, of that train of miracles  
which are recorded in the Jewish history,  
to shew an undeniable interposition of a  
power that was worthy of divinity; and  
to prove to all considering persons, that  
the

the God whom the Jewish nation served, SERM.  
VII.  
was the only living and true God: In order that the Jews themselves might be established in this principle; and that the world about them might be enlightened concerning it. Nor was this unnecessary; for we find there was in mankind a very amazing proneness to idolatry: And this not only where the religious rites, tho' foolish, and without reason, were not in themselves hurtful; but even where they were abominable, and most unnaturally cruel; as in the known instance of men's sacrificing their own children to their Gods; which was often done, and that by the most illustrious families, nay by order of the State. Indeed, the Jews themselves were strangely infected with this distemper; and from the beginning down to the Babylonish captivity, were on every occasion going after the Gods of the nations around them. Against this impious practice a great jealousy is expressed throughout the scriptures. And it is with an eye to this that glorifying God is so much insisted on; every worshipper of the true God being called upon, and stirred up to do honour to him, in opposition to

SERM. the gross and impure idolatry of the pagan  
 VII. nations; which honour was paid to him,  
 by a strict adherence to that manner of  
 worship he prescribed; but, especially by  
 faith and moral obedience. When men  
 shewed a sense of the power and perfecti-  
 ons of God, and that they could with easy  
 minds depend upon him in all circumstan-  
 ces; when they followed his dictates, though  
 at the expence of exposing themselves to  
 the most imminent danger, and to mani-  
 fold evils; when they did not dread, un-  
 der any disadvantages, to contend with  
 their enemies, assured their God was up-  
 on their side; all this shewed a deference,  
 and did an honour to the true God, that  
 was worthy of him; and must have been  
 affecting, and useful to all who observed  
 them.

But further, it is very natural to think  
 that men should frame their sentiments  
 and conduct, according to the apprehensions  
 they had of the nature, and attributes of  
 the Deities they worshipped. It was to  
 be expected that men who served Gods  
 supposed to be impure and cruel, should  
 become such themselves: Now this must  
 have been a great reproach to such Deities;  
 men

men capable of thinking, who saw idolatry very licentious, and barbarously cruel; as also, that their very religion tended to make them so; must have had a very bad opinion of their Gods, and have pronounced them what they really are, vanity and abomination. On the contrary, when men were strictly virtuous and good, when they were pure in their morals, charitable and tender hearted; and at the same time professed a religion that had a manifest tendency to establish them in the practice of these virtues; this surely must have raised, in deliberate observers, a very good opinion of the Divinity such men served; they could not but look upon him as a pure, and holy, and good, as well as a powerful and great Being. From this it is evident that the exact religious obedience of the worshippers of the true God, must contribute greatly to his honour, and so be of great use to the world. Accordingly, this is very much insisted on in the holy scriptures. *Let your light so shine before men, that they seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven. And, Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles; that whereas they speak against you*

SERM.

VII.



SERM. you as evil doers, they may, by your good

**VII.** works which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. And again, Wherefore

also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness and the work of Faith with power, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified. And, Herein is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, so shall you be my disciples.

In a word, it is most plain that we cannot any way, do real honour to the God we serve, but by the obedience of our lives. This is the mirror which best reflects his perfections as objects of imitation to the world; and our most effectual method of engaging men, to his worship and service. It is true indeed, that we are not conversant among men who know not the true God; and worship idols in his place; but yet, we converse with multitudes, who seem, in a great measure, to forget God; multitudes, who embrace principles, and follow schemes of religion, that are subversive of its true interests. In both cases, the irregular and scandalous lives of professors of the true religion, may lay in very strong, I do not

say

ay, just, prejudices against it; as also a-  
gainst the principles and methods of that  
party which may really be the best, and  
most conformable to genuine christianity. It  
is, therefore, of the utmost importance, that  
men who hold the best principles, should  
live up to them; and by the exact purity  
and charity of their lives, secure to reli-  
gion a favourable testimony in the heart  
of every judicious and impartial observer.  
As, on the other hand, if the fruit they  
bring forth, instead of being *righteousness*  
and *peace*, is rather *gall and wormwood*;  
they will thereby harden some in a negli-  
gence of all religion; and give others a  
very disadvantageous opinion of the prin-  
ciples they profess.

Nothing, in the first ages, was of equal  
importance to the conversion of the world  
to the christian faith, as the innocence  
and purity, the humility and goodness,  
the patience and fortitude, the mortifica-  
tion and heavenly mindedness of those  
who professed it. It has been often ob-  
served, and very justly, that this recom-  
mended the religion of Christ far more  
effectually, than any other means; and  
made it prosper in the world. It was  
owing

SERM. owing to this spirit of primitive christi-

VII. anity, that the most fierce and cruel persecutions, so far from destroying, really were the means of promoting it. And indeed, while mankind are not utterly lost to the sentiments of virtue and humanity, which never will nor can be the case, nothing will ever so effectually work upon, and gain them, as an uniform regularity of life, and virtuous and good affections, in the professors of the true religion.

But farther, that we may entertain sentiments concerning the glory of God, the most enlarged and generous; we must consider him as having originally framed a scheme, which he is every day, by the various methods of his providence, carrying on; in which his perfections are in the best manner displayed, and the greatest possible good will be effected. This is the true glory of God. He will communicate to his creatures, all the happiness that can be communicated, consistently with his all-glorious perfections; this renders his work honourable, and his praise everlasting. Now, in this scheme he has placed us, as moral agents in a double capacity. By our agency we become the means

means and instruments of our own, and SERM.  
others felicity : that is, by our acting a VII.  
part suitable to the law of our natures ;

benevolent, and virtuous, and good part,  
we are capable of promoting the great de-  
sign of heaven with respect to ourselves  
and others. Now, surely, we glorify God,  
in the most important sense of that word,  
when with respect to ourselves and others,  
we do all that is in our power to promote  
that end, which indeed constitutes the  
divine glory, and for which he made the  
world.

It has been already observed, that the  
glory of God must consist in communi-  
cating ; for he cannot possibly receive from  
any one. With respect to ourselves there-  
fore, we glorify him most effectually, and  
answer his divine purpose, when we pur-  
sue those measures in the conduct of life,  
which best prepare us for that felicity he  
has promised to bestow : we then best glo-  
rify God, when we so live as to become  
the objects of his favour ; and capable of  
enjoying that dignity and bliss, which his  
goodness will confer. The glory and hap-  
piness of his servants, in a state perfect  
and



SER M. and everlasting, is an illustration of di

VII. vine glory, above all other things.

So likewise, with respect to others, we glorify God, when we do all in our power to carry on this great and most benevolent scheme to its final completion. Human agency, tho' comparatively very inconsiderable, may yet here be of great importance. Men, in all stations, have opportunity of doing good; in some stations indeed, of doing very great and lasting good to the world; and to the cause of truth and virtue. How honourable now to have the power and opportunity of serving such an interest; of contributing to that divine scheme, in which, when completed, the glory of God will shine with all its lustre! It was in this manner that our blessed Redeemer glorified his heavenly father! And as he was worthy of acting the chief part in this sacred transaction, so is a station assigned him of all the most honourable. All his faithful servants, in their several stations, are to engage in the same service; they shew forth his honour: Each of them according to his appointed part, in that great drama which the Author of the universe is conducting.

counts his glory: thus they answer the SERM.  
end of being; and thus only do they glo- VII.  
rify God. Nay, those creatures in the  
world of life, which are, in their several  
orders, inferior to mankind, and even the  
inanimate parts of the creation, are said  
to praise God. The meaning of which  
figurative and poetic expression, is no  
more than that they manifest the power  
and perfection of the Creator of all, in  
serving the purposes for which they were  
created. So does the sun glorify the Cre-  
ator, by giving us day; the moon, by go-  
verning the night; the stars also in their  
several orbs; the earth by its vicissitude  
of seasons; and innumerable living crea-  
tures that inhabit it, by answering the  
particular ends of enjoyment, or useful-  
ness, for which they were contrived, and  
placed as parts of the one great system.  
Just so, as has been shewn, mankind acting  
the part that becomes them as moral a-  
gents; and by the practice of virtue, at-  
taining to happiness themselves; and pro-  
moting the virtue and happiness of others;  
thus, I say, do they glorify God, thus do  
they contribute their utmost to the per-  
fection of that immense whole, in which  
the

SERM. the glory of God is displayed. They shew

**VII.** forth the glorious dignity of his work, in their own moral perfection and happiness; and contribute what they can to the perfection of it, in others. On the whole, to conclude this head, you see what is properly meant by glorifying God: namely, doing honour to him by such expressions of faith, such acts of worship, and obedience, as shew our sense of his high perfections; and do the greatest justice to them in our power. While, at the same time, these are the means of serving that ultimate and greatest end, the preparation of ourselves and others, for that state, in which God will be, to the utmost, *glorified in his Saints.*

I now proceed to the second head, namely;

In what sense the glory of God is to be the end of our actions. *Whatsoever you do whether you eat or drink, do all to the glory of God. Glorify God in your bodies, and spirits, which are the Lord's.* And to the same purpose, the Apostle Paul, Rom. 12. 1. *I beseech you therefore brethren, that ye present your bodies, that is, yourselves, living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which*

*is your reasonable service.* In other words, **SEN M.**  
that you live intirely devoted to the pur- **VII.**  
poses of God's glory. We are here taught  
then, that the end of all our actions ought  
to be the glory of God.

But now, to shew in what sense this is  
to be understood, that it may be consist-  
ent with truth and fact, and that it may  
be indeed a reasonable service : It will ne-  
ver surely be pretended, that the glory of  
God is to be considered as separate from  
happiness and usefulness ; which are ma-  
nifestly, the direct ends of human life ;  
and indeed such separation is impossible :  
For we can glorify God no otherwise, than  
by being useful, and being happy. At  
the same time, we find that the several  
affections by which we are led to those  
ends, that is, self-love and benevolence,  
do both rest upon their respective objects,  
as their ultimate end. No one could speak  
more unintelligibly, and absurdly, than  
to say, that the love of ourselves point-  
ed to the glory of God, and not to our  
own happiness, as its proper end. Nor  
can any one say, that the love of our  
neighbour points to the glory of God, and  
not to the happiness of our neighbour, as its



SERM. proper end. It is very apparent, that  
**VII.** these affections as such, must, and cannot but rest on private and public good, as the true ends of them: Indeed as the very ends of our being, which they manifestly are. And it is impossible that our acting to serve these ends, as the true ends of being, should be wrong; unless the very frame of our nature is wrong, and those affections of self-love and benevolence, which are inseparable from such ends, are likewise wrong; which surely no man can imagine.

But farther, it is impossible we should glorify God, but by pursuing the tendencies of those affections, and the proper ends of them: For our departing from them, would be rebellion against God; and therefore a dishonouring of him. If we are disposed really to do him honour; it must be by pursuing the law of our own natures; by doing good, to ourselves, and others. And this will lead us to the true meaning of aiming at the glory of God as our end. It is evident that our being disposed to do him honour, will determine us to submit to his laws, the laws of nature, and of revelation; and it

is equally plain, that if we do this, we must be worthy and happy. Now, as we have a variety of instincts and affections in us, liable to great irregularities, much wanting discipline, and often needing to be controlled; so, a constant regard to the divine glory, a disposition, in all things, to honour our Creator; will be a very powerful controlling principle in the mind, and greatly, indeed nothing in a generous heart more powerful, to correct irregular affection and desire. And never, when we are either tempted to an ill thing, or doubt concerning doing, or forbearing to do; never, I say, will we find a safer way of directing ourselves, than by considering whether such or such an action, will do honour to our maker; whether it becomes a zeal for his glory; whether it is perfectly consistent with the delicacy of that regard, which is so justly due to him: For if not, then an ingenuous mind will certainly reject it. And thus, in all our actions, regard to the glory of God will be a controlling principle. Not that we must necessarily, in every particular action of life, have this regard explicitly in our thoughts. But that we

S E R M.  
VII.  
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SE 11 M. should be so habitually disposed, as that

**VII.** the principle may, in a manner insensibly, work in us; that all our sentiments, and conduct, should take a certain tincture from it; and that in all important cases, we should deliberately study to promote our Maker's glory. This will not counteract the true particular ends of life; but be a very effectual security of our serving them: For the mind that is disposed in this manner, will, for the sake of doing honour to its Maker, give up all those little private interests and gratifications, which are inconsistent with virtue and religious obedience.

And this great principle will be a powerful incentive to virtue. No motive more proper to work upon an ingenuous mind, either in reconciling men to the severities of self-denial, or making them active and diligent in the performance of their duty; it is, to sum up all, a worthy principle of action, and it will, when cordially entertained, prove most efficacious.

And this leads me, in conclusion, to recommend to you a spirit of zeal for the glory of God; a spirit becoming us as Christians, as well as exceedingly useful.

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Such zeal will be an excellent preservative from evil; it will point all the affections right, whether they be private or public; and will give an additional spring to them. We know, moreover, that God will accept the services done to him from this principle, and will amply reward them. Sure it is, there can no principle be more natural to the human heart; nor any affection which ingenuity does more rejoice in exercising, than that of paying respect, and doing honour, to eminent worth. He is accounted very justly, of an abandoned and most corrupted character, who feels no such respect, and veneration; for this is often found, where we see little else of the semblance of virtue, and is perhaps, the last good affection that forsakes a vicious mind. Does not all this shew, that it is most natural, most reasonable, that we should do honour to our Maker, by all means possible? In him there is infinite worth; he is without comparison, the most glorious character, incomprehensibly glorious: He is our Creator, and the father of our spirits; he is our constant benefactor; the only sure object of our hope and confidence. *Whom have we in heaven*



SERM. *but God, or on earth that we can desire besides*

VII. *him?* How lost must we have become to ingenuity, to gratitude, to all sense and goodness, if we are rebellious against God! If by transgressions we dishonour his name; or if we are utterly negligent of his glory!

There are too many of that unhappy character, that *God is not in all their thoughts*; nor in their mouths, but when they profane his name by taking it utterly in vain; which is scandalously frequent. The spirit of true zeal for God is greatly wanting! For it would be prostituting that sacred name, to give it to passion for party or denomination; for rite or ceremony; for certain sets of principles; as that zeal is often found to dwell with a temper and life, which are far from doing honour to God. I say, true zeal for what is, really, the glory of God, is greatly wanting. It seems indeed to have become an unfashionable thing; and it is to be feared, in the conceptions of some men, even reproachful. To these there never wants raillery ready to be pointed against such as shew that regard for their Maker, as makes them dare to be singular;

lar; who can brook, with undisturbed S E R M.  
minds, any ludicrous or unfair light, in VII.  
which satyr can set their temper and conduct. But, surely, the more this is seen to be the distemper of the age, the more ought the votaries of true religion to set themselves against it; ever zealous to do honour to that sacred name, which others profane. One cannot help thinking, that every ingenuous heart must feel indignation spring up in it, when men are heard to say, and seen to do things that are a reproach and dishonour to their Maker; things which betray an utter negligence of that holy presence which is ever with us: nor is it easy to conceive any thing more odious, and contemptible, than that spurious wit, which sets itself in opposition to the divine honour; or, which is the same thing, to the steady undissembled practice of real religion and virtue. Nor can any man act a better part in life, than to give these, on all occasions, the full weight of his interest and example. What profound respect and veneration ought we to pay to the father of our spirits! our omnipotent and most faithful friend! the guide of our way! the sole object of our

SERMON. highest trust and hope! how should we  
 VII. avoid the haunts of those unhappy men,  
 who glory in what is their greatest shame;  
 who seem to take pleasure in what is real  
 indignity to that Being, in whose hand their  
 breath is, and whose are all their ways!

SERMON

# SERMON VIII.

The scripture doctrine of the mediation of Christ explained.

I TIMOTHY 2. 5.

*For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time,*

It is apparent from innumerable and SERM.  
VIII. obvious instances, that the supreme Being serveth the great designs he hath formed, (and which, in the course of his providence, he is daily carrying into execution,) very much by the intervention and agency of his creatures. These, according to their various orders, and the powers conferred upon them, have different parts assigned them to act; some of greater, some of less importance; the lower for instance,

or



SERM. or brutal orders, appear to act under the

VIII. direction of instinct; but the higher, who

are voluntary and moral agents, and capable of obedience to laws, in the proper sense of that word, acting from counsel, and design, and choice; endowed, by the Maker of all, with affections adapted to the state in which they are placed, the relations in which they stand to other beings, and to those services in the Creation, which they are called to perform. Thus

He who is the original fountain of perfection and happiness to all, hath so contrived the general plan of the universe, that his creatures shall be the means and instruments of communicating happiness to one another; and to this nature prompteth them; being furnished with principles and affections, which not only excite to acts of beneficence, but render such acts when performed from real good will, most pleasing and grateful to their reflecting thoughts; to which thoughts beneficence will ever appear a most excellent thing.

It is worthy our observation, that as far as we are acquainted with the intellectual and moral creation, there is no creature in that rank, but who is capable

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some useful service, of some acts of beneficence; thus contributing his share as a member of the great community, and partaking in that happiness which is annexed to the doing of good. Amongst mankind, even those of the very lowest form, and who have the most scanty measure of abilities, yet, in some stations and circumstances, may be useful: Things are so designed and contrived, and that mutual dependence, which is one great cement of society, arises from so many complicated wants, as render proportionably various services necessary; some of them indeed of comparatively small importance; that there is no man, for whom a station may not be found, in which his powers applied with worthy and good dispositions, will render him serviceable; and even, as such low services must be performed, significant. How much more then are persons in high station, of suitable abilities and goodness of disposition, prepared for very great services, and for diffusing much happiness around them! These indeed are the fairest images of Divinity upon earth, and must relish the highest pleasure.

When

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When we therefore turn our thoughts to the orders of being above us, it is easy to conceive there may be individuals, of the angelic kind suppose, of much higher endowments than any mortal; and who act in a much more important and extensive sphere. Still farther, when we ascend above the angelic orders, we see one, in whose peculiar relation to the Father of all, and in whose glory and perfection we are instructed by revelation only; who is described as *the beginning of the creation of God; by whom God made the worlds; by whom all things consist; and who is the Head of all things, and head over them.* By this divine person the goodness of God floweth out, in the richest abundance, to our world, and to the human race. In which respect, above all others, he is *the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person.* And, as the holy scriptures have acquainted us with the being of such a person, so the station assigned him by the sacred writers, (so important, and the means of such happiness to the world,) is perfectly suitable to the subserviency above observed, of voluntar

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moral agents to the happiness of others. **SERM.**  
In this sense, then, the Son of God is the **VIII.**  
mediator between the Father and us, that  
by him we receive the greatest, and most  
invaluable blessings.

But farther, the holy scriptures direct  
us to consider the Son of God, our Saviour,  
as the mediator of peace and reconcilia-  
tion with God, to whose displeasure man-  
kind were, by sin, universally exposed;  
and as the word is, in common conversa-  
tion, often used to signify a person who  
interposes to reconcile parties at variance;  
so the reconciliation of the world, at a  
fatal moral distance from God, is ascribed  
to the interposition of our blessed Lord,  
as the great appointed means of its accom-  
plishment: And in this respect, more  
peculiarly, he is our only mediator. That  
the apostle, in the words of the text, spoke  
of him as, in this sense, our mediator  
with God, is evident from the 6th verse;  
*who gave himself a ransom for all, to be tes-  
tified in due time.*

This then is the subject upon which I  
propose at present to discourse. And, I  
shall first lay before you the scriptural ac-  
count of it, summed up, as briefly as may  
be;



SERMON. be; secondly, inquire into the ends to be  
 VIII. served by the mediation of our Lord; and  
 shew how, as a means, the various parts  
 he acted, answered these ends; and then  
 make reflections upon the whole, with a  
 particular view to the removing of some  
 difficulties, which have been thought  
 greatly to embarrass this subject.

First then, briefly to lay before you the  
 scriptural account of this matter. Now  
 this account is as follows; that mankind  
 having universally perverted their way,  
 and having been in a state of moral dark-  
 ness, guilt, and corruption; liable to the  
 divine displeasure; it pleased God, in his  
 infinite goodness and clemency, to send  
 his only begotten son, to seek and save  
 them, from this deplorable state. And, to  
 prepare the world for the introduction and  
 appearance of this divine person, many  
 predictions, some even from the very  
 early ages, were published concerning him;  
 nay, the Jewish religious constitution is  
 represented as, in many instances, typical  
 of him, and as shadowing out his priest-  
 hood and kingdom. That, in the fulness  
 of time appointed by the father, he ac-  
 cordingly came into the world; took our

nature

nature upon him; with it's sinless infir-  
mities; conversed with mankind; by his

S E R M.  
VIII.

doctrines and precepts laying the foundations of a kingdom of truth and righteousness; in substance the same with that which the God of nature had originally founded in the heart of man. That when he had fulfilled his public personal ministry, the divine authority of which was clearly evinced by the many miracles he worked; he then, according to the counsels of the father, gave himself up to suffering, and to the death of the cross. There, in scripture language, *he offered himself a sacrifice for sin; shed his blood for the remission of it; and gave himself a ransom for many.* That he rose again from the dead; and because he humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross; therefore God hath also highly exalted him; hath placed him at his own right hand; subjected all things to him; made him head over all, and gave him all power and authority, in heaven and on earth; which power and kingdom he will retain till the consummation of all things; *when he is to deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the father, that God may be all in all.*

That

SERMON. That we are to regard him as constituted  
VIII. by the father, to be our head and Lord; that from him immediately, we receive the blessings and advantages of the gospel kingdom and dispensation; that he hath unalterably fixed the terms of our acceptance, and salvation, and that he is appointed to be our judge, at the great day.

These are the main things taught us in Scripture, concerning the mediation of our blessed Saviour. And there should seem no need of multiplying words to shew that this is, in truth, a most amazing scene; that nothing of a more interesting nature can enter into the heart of man: nor is it possible for any thinking person to believe it, without seeing that it demands his serious attention; especially, with regard to the improvement to be made of it.

Let us, in the next place, consider the ends to be answered by this interposition of the only begotten Son of God. And, in general, the raising of mankind, dead in trespasses and sins, to a holy and divine life, and to the happiness which is annexed to it; was unquestionably the great

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great end ; The promoting of moral ex-  
cellence, and of blessedness, in the creati-  
tion of God ! This is the noblest, the most  
important of all designs ; of all others,  
most worthy of the supreme Being ! It is  
an end, for the serving of which, nothing  
whatsoever that can be done, is too great,  
or too wonderful. The events, indeed,  
which are the subject of this discourse, re-  
lating to the mediation of our Saviour,  
may appear beyond expression wonderful ;  
but, when we consider the grand design,  
and, that rectitude and holiness are the  
most excellent things in the creation of  
God, indeed the glory of God himself ;  
we shall then see that it is impossible to  
think any thing too great to be used, as a  
means of promoting them in the uni-  
verse.

But, to descend more particularly into  
the consideration of this subject ; and to  
shew how the part our Saviour sustained,  
and what he did and suffered, tend to  
promote this great design ; it may be ob-  
served,

First, that he was of the highest im-  
portance to this end, as he became a *light*  
*to the world* ; that men *might not sit in dark-*



**SERM.** *ness*, but have *the light of life*. Without  
**VIII.** light there can be no life: Accordingly,  
 he gave the clearest and fullest instructions,  
 and with the greatest and most unquestionable authority: Thus most effectually putting his disciples into the only true way to salvation; delivering them from ignorance and darkness, from the bondage of superstition, and furnishing them with those principles, which are the sources of all that is good and happy.

Secondly, as our blessed Saviour, *the day spring from on high*, diffused that most glorious light, which of all things was most necessary to answer his great and good design, of shewing men what they ought to do; so, does his mediation suggest to them, some most powerful motives to obedience; such as are wonderfully fitted to work on an ingenuous heart.

Herein, most remarkably, the Love of the Father towards mankind appeared, and his earnestness for their salvation—earnestness, we may well call it, after our way of conceiving and speaking; because such it would really be, in any being to whom such a feeling may be properly ascribed:

ascribed : and though the absolute per-  
fection of the supreme Being places him  
above the affection to which we give that  
name ; yet there must be even in him  
something analogous to it ; such a desire  
of an event, as determines him to do,  
whatever is to bring it to pass :—I say,  
this great work shews the earnestness of  
the Father of mercies, for our salvation.  
It was such that He *spared not his own son,*  
*but gave him up to the death for us all.*  
How important then must our salvation  
be, how dear an object to him ! what  
gratitude do we not owe him ! what may  
we not expect from him ! and how glo-  
rious must this salvation be !

Again, the manner in which our re-  
demption and salvation is effected, name-  
ly, by the incarnation, the sufferings, and  
death of the son of God, as it is full of  
instruction, so is it also of most persua-  
sive tendency to engage the heart, to fill  
it with a just sense of the things which  
concern our salvation, and with the most  
useful sentiments. God sendeth his own  
son, in flesh, who came (in obedience to  
the Father) to accomplish an end, which  
did the highest honour to the Father ; and

**SERM.** shewed, through the whole of the part  
**VIII.** he acted, a merit the most consummate  
that ever was exhibited on the theatre of  
this world. As the reward of this, the  
Father exalts him to the highest and most  
important station ; investing him with all  
power and authority ; placing the con-  
duct of our salvation in his hands ; par-  
ticularly giving him authority to pardon  
the sins of the truly penitent, and to con-  
fer life eternal on them ; and accordingly,  
by him the great and precious promises  
of the new covenant, and the terms of  
our acceptance, are declared. This me-  
thod of receiving the penitent into fa-  
vour, and the honour which is done by  
it to our mediator, that, through his hand,  
all blessings and advantages should come  
to us ; is the most solemn testimony which  
God could give to mankind, of his regard  
to what is excellent and worthy : that  
nothing is, in his estimation, to be com-  
pared to it ; and that the highest honours,  
and happiness, will always be conferred  
upon the greatest merit. But then, it is  
not possible to consider the matter in this  
light, without seeing that where such ap-  
probation of and regard are shewn to ex-  
alted

alted merit, there must be, at the same time, a proportionable displeasure at sin ; for, that penitents receive the remission of it, by an authority conferred as the reward of the most consummate merit, cannot but point out to them the displeasure of the supreme Being, at transgression and guilt ; nor can any other reason possibly be assigned, for their receiving pardon by such a mediation : but this reason is obvious ; it naturally, and necessarily enters into the mind, as something analogous to this conduct, is familiar to us in the affairs of this world ; in which, persons of particular merit are often honoured by superiors, so far as that, by their mediation, faults are forgiven, and favours conferred on persons, whom the superior would impress with this sentiment, that they had otherwise, no claim to such favours, or that they had deserved ill.

And, undoubtedly, to beget in the minds of men a just sense of the excellence of righteousness and goodness, of God's love and regard to it ; and of the evil of sin, and his displeasure at it, is one of the noblest ends which can be served ; and



SERM. we see it is a thing most difficult to be  
VIII. attained. Men may be convinced, by reasoning, of both ; but they cannot easily be made to feel ; (nay this is, perhaps one of the hardest things in the world) so as to determine them effectually in their conduct. So that if the interposition of our Saviour, and what he has done and suffered, hath a direct tendency to answer this end, it must then be acknowledged as highly worthy of him ; and surely, if it hath such a tendency at all, nothing can be a means more obvious, nor so effectual. When it is considered, that particularly for this purpose, among others, our blessed Saviour came, and suffered, and died ; it must, above all things, impress the mind with such a deep sense of these most important matters, as our Maker would have us ever to retain. In fine, the sum of the whole seemeth to be this,—God will pardon the sincerely penitent ; but he will do it in such a manner, as shall be to the whole intellectual and moral creation, the most solemn testimony of his love to purity, and holiness, and goodness ; and of his displeasure at sin ; and which shall tend to impress

impress this sense of things most deeply, SERM.  
and indelibly, upon the minds of all who VIII.  
are concerned in it. }

Here let it be observed, that the divine placability is not at all called in question; nor any hopes or knowledge, which penitents might naturally have, of the remission of sins, by the goodness and clemency of God: (though it must be owned, that great wilful transgressors, without some express declaration on God's part, must ever be liable to much difficulty, and many painful apprehensions in their own minds.) However, these things do not at all affect the present argument; for whether they had, or had not, such hope or knowledge, is really nothing to the manner in which God is pleased to pronounce the pardon of sin; nor, to whatever instructions, by the manner he chose, were intended to be conveyed to us.

From what hath been said we may likewise see, how the voluntary sufferings and death of our Saviour, have an influence and efficacy, as the means of our obtaining forgiveness of sin: They have this efficacy, as they were the most con-

SERM. spicuous acts of our Lord's consummate  
 VIII. merit, and by which it was compleated, and he was perfected. As the Apostle observeth, Heb. 2, 10. *It became him by whom are all things, and for whom are all things, in bringing many sons and daughters to glory, to make the Captain of our salvation perfect through suffering; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation to all them who obey him.*

It is our Saviour's consummate unequalled merit, which, by the Father's good pleasure and appointment, lieth at the foundation of all this scheme. And as the laying down his life was that act which did the highest honour to the Father, and finished our Saviour's merit, it is therefore spoken of, in scripture, as *our ransom*, as *the attonement* for us, and in other such expressions; all which seem to signify, that this last act of the scene was that which was most of all considered; and upon which our Saviour's exaltation as a *Prince and a Saviour*, followed.

Our blessed Lord tells us that *he shed his blood for the remission of sin*; that *he gave his life a ransom for many*; and we are taught, that *he offered himself a sacrifice* for

for sin, that *he is the propitiation for our sins*; and that *we are washed from our sins in his blood*; with many other such phrases;

SERM.  
VIII.

some of which are plainly figurative; and cannot be taken in a strictly proper sense, without great absurdity. But with respect to sacrifices, it seems to have been the original intention of them to do honour to God; they were, indeed, a part of religious worship. Sacrifices for penitent offenders were offered as a solemn confession, on the part of the offenders, of their guilt; and perhaps as an external expression, and memorial, of what, in strictness of law, they deserved. Sacrifices were consumed and destroyed; this has given some persons an occasion to say, that the sacrifice underwent the destruction which the transgressor deserved. Whatever the Jews thought in this matter, which it is not easy for us to know with certainty; yet we are sure it bears no sort of application to our Saviour; who, so far from perishing in his death, was, as the reward of his submitting to it, advanced to the highest and most important station in the kingdom of God: wherefore, the sacrifices under the law could bear no resemblance



SERM. blance to him, in this respect. We are

VIII. also sure that nothing can be pleasing to

God, or do him honour, but what is morally excellent and worthy. So that, tho' he was pleased with the sacrifices under the law, when they were offered with sincere hearts, and in obedience to him; yet we certainly know, that he could not be pleased with the blood of bullocks and of goats. That which rendered the death of our Lord so pleasing and meritorious in his sight, was its having been a most conspicuous act of obedience; the most honourable and worthy conclusion of a life, in all respects perfect. As was said before, our Saviour was perfected by it. Thus obtained he power to forgive sin, and to be the *author of eternal salvation*. Therefore, so far is his death to be looked upon as a sacrifice for sin, as thereby he obtained power to pardon, to proclaim peace and reconciliation to the guilty. And that such illustrious merit may be considered under the notion of atonement, will appear plain from a very remarkable passage in the book of Numbers, chap. 25, When Phineas the priest instantly put to death an Israelite who

had brought a Midianitish woman into SERM.  
his tent, in direct and most presumptu- VIII.  
ous transgression of the law of God; I

say, when Phineas had put them both to death, this his zeal for the Divine honour was so well accepted of God, that he thus spoke to Moses; *Phineas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel (while he was zealous for my sake among them) that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy. Wherefore say, behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace, and he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood, because he was zealous for his God, and made an attonement for the children of Israel; who all of them, we see, reaped the happy fruits of this man's distinguished zeal. How much more do we reap the fruits of our Lord's most perfect merit! whom God hath therefore crowned with authority to forgive us our sins; and to pronounce us, on the terms of faith and repentance, in favour with our Maker.*

The great thing to be attended to in this whole matter, is, that the greatest honour is done to the Father of all; and to righteousness

SERMON. teousness, and true holiness: Now this

VIII. honour, certainly is the true intention of all sacrifices: as it also is the intention which the authors of some schemes, with respect to our redemption by Christ, have professed to pursue: who yet, by their explanations, without warrant from the holy scriptures, have laid Christianity, in their sense of that word, open to great objections, some of which seem unanswerable; by a mistaken zeal for the laws and the justice of God, explaining things so as to make him appear most terrible; as treating his offending creatures, in all the strictness and rigour of law and justice; so that penitent pardoned sinners are indeed under great obligations to their mediator and surety; but, properly speaking, in the point of justification, meet with no clemency from their supreme Lord and judge, who is represented as exacting to the utmost; they speak, accordingly, of penalties, of vindictive justice, of equivalent vicarious punishments, of proper satisfaction to justice, and such other things, rather after the manner of human governments, and human courts; without properly attending to it, that this is

not

not the way in which the Father of mer-  
cies proceeds with his frail offending crea-  
tures: Thus do they involve themselves  
in inextricable difficulties; still, however,  
professing that it is only the honour of  
God, and of his laws, which is intended  
to be supported and illustrated. But it  
will be evident to all who seriously attend,  
that the strong figurative expressions of  
the New Testament, on which such human  
schemes of redemption are founded, were  
intended to be used in an allusive, and  
not at all a strictly literal sense; many of  
which, taken in such a sense, would lead  
us into the grossest absurdity. It is hoped  
the true meaning and design of them  
 hath been already declared in this dis-  
course, namely, that God chose to pardon  
penitent offenders, by the mediation of  
our Saviour, as a most solemn testimony  
to the intellectual and moral creation, of  
his regard and love to the highest moral  
excellence and merit of our Saviour; at  
the same time, as a standing memorial of  
his displeasure at transgression and sin;  
and that his counsel and design was, to  
impress on the minds of men this sense  
of these matters, as deeply as possible.

S E R M.  
VIII.

Thus,



**SERM.** Thus, though we know, from the light  
**VIII.** of nature, the goodness and clemency of  
God, and are assured of them; yet the  
gift of the Son of God, to suffer and die  
for us, is an illustration of that goodness  
and clemency, which wonderfully raises  
our sense of it, and giveth great gladness  
of heart; so, in like manner, though by  
the light of nature we know the excel-  
lence of moral rectitude and goodness,  
and the regard of the Father of all to it,  
with his displeasure at willful transgres-  
sion; yet this illustration which we have  
of both, by the method of our salvation  
through Christ, may answer the worthiest  
end, by exciting in us such sentiments of  
these things, and by affecting our minds  
to such a degree, as we should not have  
otherwise known. Let it be attended to  
lastly, that this particular end of the me-  
diation, the suffering and death, of our  
Saviour, is never to be considered as de-  
tached from the other great purposes which  
are served by it; such as, the confirmation  
and establishment of his religion; the  
giving us a most glorious and perfect ex-  
ample, in human nature, of every thing  
good and worthy; the doing honour to  
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state externally low and afflicted; with **SERM.**  
such other things as are to be taken into **VIII.**  
the account, in considering the design of  
this great transaction, and in illustrating  
the wisdom of it. Upon the whole, it  
will appear that the Gospel of our Sa-  
viour, and his interposition, according to  
the counsels of divine wisdom and good-  
ness, are not only of infinite use by the  
diffusion of the true light of life; but  
also as they furnish the most engaging mo-  
tives to obedience, taken especially from  
the love of God to mankind, manifested  
in his gift of Christ; and from the high  
honour and regard which is shewn to true  
righteousness and holiness, in this whole  
transaction.

Let it be observed, in conclusion, that  
when things are considered in this light,  
the greatest difficulties which have been  
thought to press the christian scheme, are  
removed; and the objections of its adver-  
saries admit of an easy answer. Thus  
there is nothing in Christianity which is  
inconsistent with our natural notions of  
the divine perfections; or with the unal-  
terable law written on the heart of man:  
True

SERM. True religion, consisting in the love of

VIII. God and man, in purity, righteousness, and charity, practised under a sense of the divine government, and with a disposition to please God, is the same under all dispensations: And the favour of God will always follow the individuals who sincerely practise them, in proportion to the degree of purity, righteousness, and charity, to which they have attained; in other words, in proportion to the degree of their virtue; it is that only which can render us pleasing in the sight of our Maker; and all dispensations of religion, are, and can be, no more than means for accomplishing the greatest of all ends, namely promoting virtue, moral perfection, and the happiness annexed to them. Now this is the whole intention pursued by all that our Saviour hath done, and suffered for us; all is a means of serving this great end; extraordinary indeed it may appear to us; but as extraordinary as it may seem, every wise man must acknowledge that the end hath a proportionable importance; being indeed, the most excellent which can be conceived.

But

But then, let it ever be our care that SERM.  
VIII.  
what our blessed Lord hath done and suf-  
fered, for our salvation, may have its pro-

per weight and influence on our minds ;  
engaging us to forsake evil, to love the  
Lord, and to work righteousness : If it  
hath not this influence on us, it can be  
of no service to us. We may conceive  
vain and delusive hopes, but all these must  
vanish, as a dream when a man awaketh.  
Christ came to save us from our sins ; but  
not in the continued practice of them ;  
which the unalterable moral constitution  
we are under, renders impossible. Happy  
they, who constrained by the love of God,  
and of Christ, and the other gospel mo-  
tives, give up themselves as the faithful  
servants of God, and have it constantly  
at heart to obey the laws he hath given  
us ; renouncing with indignation, what-  
ever tends to render them disloyal to, and  
ungratefully rebellious against him ! Hap-  
py, forever happy shall they be, in that  
glorious state in which they have fellow-  
ship with Christ himself ; possessing all that  
was intended as the end of his most bene-  
ficent interposition, and of all that he  
did and suffered ! And I beseech you to

Vo L. II.

Q

consider,



S E R M. consider, whether any thing should so  
VIII. much engage the heart of man, to a full,  
cordial, and resolved compliance with the  
divine will ; as this method which the  
wisdom and goodness of God have devised  
for our salvation ; against which there is,  
in reason, nothing to be objected ; but  
either that the principal particular end,  
which in this discourse hath been insist-  
ed on, namely, the exciting in Christians,  
the deepest, and most powerful, and con-  
straining sense of the excellency of virtue,  
of God's regard to it, and of his displea-  
sure at sin ; that this particular end, I say,  
was not worthy to be served by such  
means ; or that the means used are not  
properly adapted to serve the end. Now,  
that such end is not worthy, or of impor-  
tance enough to be served by such means,  
it is thought no one will take upon him  
to say. It is, undoubtedly, the very great-  
est thing which can be done for us, and ab-  
solutely necessary to our salvation. 'Till  
we attain to a just sense in matters of mo-  
rality, and which concern our salvation,  
there is no real lasting good to be done in  
us, or for us ; nothing will be right, till we  
attain to such a sense as will effectually

mold

mold our tempers, and determine our con-  
duct; and therefore, if it was fit for our SERM.  
Saviour to interpose at all for our sal-  
vation, and to suffer and die, it was fit VIII.  
for him to do it, that this particular pur-  
pose might be answered. And as to the  
propriety of the means to answer this end,  
let every man judge, whether any thing  
can equally strike his mind, or affect his  
heart, as such an astonishing manner of  
God's bearing testimony of his regard and  
love to virtue; and his crowning it,  
in the person possessed of it in the  
highest possible degree, with such sin-  
gular and peculiar honour; which manner  
of bearing testimony to virtue, does at the  
same time, and cannot but testify his dis-  
pleasure at sin; farther, let any man judge,  
whether any thing can equally impress his  
mind with a sense of the earnestness of  
the supreme Ruler, for delivering his  
creatures from the power of sin, and en-  
gaging them to the practice of true holi-  
ness, that they may obtain salvation, as  
the mediation of our Saviour, by his ap-  
pointment. But, I say, may we feel the  
happy influences and effects of this a-  
mazing counsel, upon our own hearts!

Q 2

Let

**SERM.** Let us frequently reflect, how deplorable  
**VIII.** that state, which even the Son of God  
came to redeem us from, at the expence  
to himself of such sufferings, and of such  
a death ! Let us seriously consider, how  
glorious that state, into which, at such ex-  
pence to himself, he introduceth us; and lay  
our hearts open to the constraining power  
of his love ! It is not in philosophical or  
critical inquiries into this subject that we  
are principally concerned; but that we may  
answer, in the most effectual manner, the  
great design of the gospel ; and that we  
may be saved, in the day of the Lord Jesus.

**SERMON**

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35.

# SERMON IX.

What the sentiments of angels concerning our present state may be supposed to be ; and the motives which arise from hence to conduct life wisely and virtuously.

HEBREWS I. 14.

*Are they not all ministring spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation ?*

IT is certain that our duty as the sub-SERM. IX.  
jects of God's kingdom, and as the disciples of Christ, may be easily understood ; it requires no great depth of penetration to comprehend it, nor any great labour to find it out. And in this respect, particularly, we may apply the words of the Prophet Isaiah 35. 8. concerning the way in which the  
Q 3 redeemed



SERM. redeemed should walk ; *That the wayfaring*

IX.

*man, tho' a fool, should not err therein.* Agreeably to this, the Apostle Paul observeth, Rom. 10. 6, *The righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven? that is, to bring Christ down from above. Or, who shall descend into the deep? that is, to bring Christ up from the dead. But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thine heart; that is, the word of faith which we preach, that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God raised him from him the dead, thou shalt be saved.* And, as the knowledge of what is necessary to be believed and done, is easily attained ; so also the great arguments adapted to engage men in the performance of their duty, lie within a very narrow compass ; being found in the acknowledged dignity and excellence of an holy and good life ; in the innumerable benefits and advantages which are annexed to it in this world ; in the favour of God which will always follow it ; and in the assurances of a glorious immortality, as the ample reward in reserve for the righteous. All these things are plain and

and obvious. But then it will likewise be S E R M.  
acknowledged, that it may be very pro- IX.

fitable to consider in various views, the matters which concern our salvation; to set them in whatever light they may most affect the mind; to weigh all circumstances which tend to make any impression, and to engage us to that which is good. Now, amongst these, the light in which our behaviour may appear to the orders of being above us, does not seem the least considerable; on this subject therefore, shall the present discourse turn.

That there are superior orders of being; that there are angels, though to us invisible, conversant also in our world, and concerned in its affairs; is plainly intimated in the holy scriptures. Concerning the existence of such beings, the light of nature, indeed, gives us no demonstrative proof. Nor from what we see with our eyes, can we at all certainly infer that there are such orders of creatures, as we do with the clearest evidence, from what we see of the works of nature, infer the existence of an original intelligent cause, to which we ascribe all of them. But yet, when we consider that the intelligent prin-

**SERM.** ciple within us, which is the subject of  
**IX.** all our perceptions, the agent that thinks,  
 and the cause of all voluntary actions, is  
 a thing quite distinct in its nature from  
 matter; though, in our frame and state,  
 united to it, and exerting its powers by  
 means of corporeal organs; all this con-  
 sider'd, it is easily supposable that, as this  
 principle in us may exist out of its pre-  
 sent material frame, as well as in it; so  
 there may be other intelligent beings  
 which never were, nor ever shall be so  
 united to matter. Besides, we shall be  
 inclined to think that there may be really  
 such kinds of creatures, of a rank supe-  
 rior to us, from what we see in the va-  
 rious gradations of nature, in the orders  
 of being beneath us. The least excellent  
 in kind, and the lowest, is dead unorga-  
 nized matter: Next to that appear the  
 vegetable kinds; which have an orga-  
 nized form, and grow from small seeds,  
 many of them to very great bulk. But  
 their life, however that word is used to  
 express their motion, and growth, shews  
 nothing of sensation or action in it. Be-  
 tween the vegetable and animal there are  
 certain kinds, which seem to partake of  
 the

the nature of both. But then, from the SERM.  
lowest in the animal kind, how many gra- IX.  
dations are there, from less to more per-  
fect and excellent, till we rise to the high-  
est ranks of mere animal life; which kinds,  
according to their several degrees, discover  
more or less of sense, understanding, and  
active principle; but still seem utterly void  
of all moral powers? Far above all these  
is man, constituted Lord of this sublunary  
creation; made capable of knowing right  
and wrong; and favoured with a large  
measure of intellectual faculties and en-  
dowments. Thus, the works of God  
which we behold, from dead and unactive  
matter ascend, step by step, to such crea-  
tures and such forms as fill us with high  
admiration. And then, having once got  
the idea of immaterial substance, endowed  
with such powers and faculties as the hu-  
man soul, and which may subsist inde-  
pendent of matter, what a glorious scene  
opens to the mind! how many orders of  
such creatures may be reasonably supposed,  
rising to such degrees of excellency, and  
power, and perfection, as exceed all our  
present conceptions! For, who can think  
of the great scale, and gradation of be-  
ing



SERM. ing ends intirely in man, when we see

IX. there may be so many orders of creatures rising upwards superior to him? If we look into the writings of the antients, whether they struck out the ideas of such created superior intelligences, from their own reasoning; or, by tradition derived from original revelation; certain it is they had notions of such intelligences and ascribed to their agency many things in this world. However, we see in the holy scriptures this matter is put beyond doubt; we there have frequent mention of angels; of various orders of them; of vast numbers; and we also see, in several instances, that their power is very great. But what is most noticeable in their history, is, that as they were all made moral agents, the subjects of God's kingdom and under a law to him; so while one part retained their purity, innocence, and loyalty to their Maker and supreme Lord others, by transgression, fell from the original dignity and glory of their state; became very guilty, and very miserable reserved in chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day. But what is to our present purpose principally, is to observe

that numbers of angels, both good and SERM.  
bad, are conversant in our world. The IX.  
latter, by divine permission, are represen-  
ted as the authors of much evil, and suf-  
fering; while the former, as the mini-  
sters of God's kingdom, are represented  
as serving the purposes of his providence.  
Psal. 103, *Bless the Lord ye angels that  
excell in strength, that do his commandments,  
marking to the voice of his word. Bless  
the Lord all his hosts, ye ministers of his  
that do his pleasure.* We read too, that  
the chariots of God are thousands of angels;  
and you see, in the text, they are repre-  
sented as *ministring spirits, sent forth by  
their head and Lord, to minister to  
them who shall be heirs of salvation.* As to  
the particular instances we have of the  
ministry of angels, in scripture, in exe-  
cuting the divine purposes, whether of  
mercy or of judgment, they are so many,  
and must be so familiar to all who are  
conversant in scripture, that they need  
not be here mentioned. The scriptures  
indeed, from the beginning, are full of  
them: The names also of some angels are  
given us; and a particular account of the  
services they performed. Sometimes they  
appeared

SERM. appeared in the human form ; at other

IX. times they were invisible ; and no doubt  
 it is in this manner they usually perform  
 the services to which they are appointed.  
 However, if we believe the accounts given  
 us in the holy scriptures, we must be  
 fully satisfied that they are very much con-  
 versant in our world ; are attentive to the  
 affairs of it, and are employed by providence,  
 in conducting of them. And that we do not  
 see them with our eyes, is no reason at all  
 why we should not believe the reality of their  
 presence among us, and that many events are  
 brought to pass by their means.

It may be then of some use, to consider  
 what those blessed spirits may be supposed  
 to think of us ; how they regard our state  
 and affairs, our pleasures and pains ; especially  
 when it is considered that, in a little time we  
 shall be divested of these gross bodies, and  
 placed in a state like theirs, in this respect.—  
 I fear this consideration may be of use to  
 us. For assuredly, if we could see, with our  
 bodily eyes, these ministers of the divine  
 kingdom conversant among us, beings of  
 such excellent power and dignity, of such

spotless purity and goodness, in a parti-  
cular manner also friendly to mankind; SERM.  
IX.

—if we thus saw them in our solitary  
walks, or in our assemblies, we should  
think great respect and reverence due to  
them; we should labour to approve to  
them our sentiments, and our conduct.  
Now, if they are really amongst us, though  
the bodily eye does not discern them,  
surely we owe them suitable regard. One  
would think that natural disposition to  
act with decency before our fellow crea-  
tures of the same species, and to endea-  
vour to approve ourselves to them, espe-  
cially to the wise and good; should ope-  
rate, very sensibly, with respect to supe-  
rior orders of being, who may be supposed  
to be witnesses to our conduct; to know,  
and regard our tempers, inclinations, and  
sentiments, as manifested in our beha-  
viour. May it not therefore, be of use  
to attend to this; and to consider how  
these excellent spirits may be affected to-  
wards us? If what we know to be the  
estimation of persons of our own species  
concerning us, has such an influence up-  
on our minds; if we set such a value  
upon



SERMON upon honour and reputation among them

**IX.** and this accounted not the least part of the reward of a righteous behaviour; then certainly it must be pleasing to the mind of a virtuous person, to think that he is esteemed and beloved by those who are in a rank high above mortals, and it must be a very natural incentive to him to be and to do good. But farther, when we know that the time approaches quickly, when we shall exist in a state of separation from body; when we shall unquestionably feel those sentiments concerning our present state, which it is reasonable to suppose those pure spirits always have; it will at present, appear profitable to us to think with our selves what these sentiments are, or, which is the same thing, how we should judge and be affected, if in their rank, and their state.

To come to particulars; there is nothing more certain than that goodness and righteousness, are the greatest glory of the intelligent and moral nature. These, in their highest possible perfection, are the glory of Divinity itself; such degrees therefore as creatures attain, and in which their Maker's resemblance consists, must

be their highest excellency and glory. **SERM.**  
Hence we may be sure that the delight of **IX.**

those excellent unembodied spirits, and who are spotlessly pure and good, must be in the righteous and holy, who are the excellent of the earth. These, in proportion to their attainments, they must esteem and love. On the contrary, all unrighteousness and vice, must be their utter aversion. With what friendly regard must they be supposed to look upon the upright person; with what chearfulness perform the services and good offices towards him, which they receive in charge, as the instruments of divine providence in training him up, through the discipline of mortal life, to that state in which he shall be more upon a level with themselves, and their eternal companion? What pleasure likewise, must they take in the conversion of a sinner to the paths of truth and righteousness, and in every accession to the family of God? Thus our blessed Saviour teaches, that there is joy in the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth. All the various steps by which men grow from the beginnings and infancy of true virtue and religion, to the maturity

SERMON. turity of it, must be pleasing in their eyes,

IX. as every false step, every deviation, must be offensive and grievous. All the instances of religious and virtuous self-denial, all those conflicts between conscience and inclination, in which the former obtaineth the victory; all the eminent actions of life, in which men have distinguished themselves as friends to God and goodness, must give them pleasure and satisfaction. Virtue, unquestionably, is the only valuable distinction, in their eyes, and with which no other endowment is to be compared. But this need not be enlarged on; for if these pure and good spirits are at all conversant among us, it is evident that thus they must be affected towards the moral characters of such as fall under their observation.

But now, let us also imagine what their sentiments must be concerning other endowments, and distinctions, which men may be possessed of, who are utter strangers to true virtue, and in whom the love of God and of goodness have little or no place. What a figure doth high station and great power and authority, make amongst mortals; what low obeisance

wh

what marks and expressions of dependence, **S E R M.**  
and subjection, do they expect from their **IX.**

fellow-creatures who are in their power?

What servile and flattering speeches do such meet with! what attention, from vulgar minds, to the pomp and splendor of their appearance! In the mean time, with what utter neglect must superior orders of being look down upon all these things! with what contempt of the characters of those unhappy men to whom they are, in a manner, the chief good; and of such likewise as, in the meanness of a servile spirit, pay all that homage which is the unrighteous support of such vanity and pride! But especially where greatness, and power, and authority, are applied to serve bad purposes, and so become a great, perhaps the greatest nuisance in the world; what must the great and good minds who from a superior rank, look down upon us, think of this? How must they abhor wicked greatness? But indeed, let any ingenuous man think how little the admiration and homage that is paid to mere external splendor, and the acclamations of poor deluded mortals; how little all this is worth, when compared



SERMON. with that just esteem which the higher  
 IX. orders pay to solid and substantial virtue!

These spirits, the best judges of it, and who are placed above all that weakness, by which the minds of mankind are betrayed to regard mere shew and shadow, as if it were substance and reality! Nay more, might these external distinctions continue for ever, yet would they be of small value in the eyes of the angels of God; but now of how much smaller, when they see that in a very little time the possessors shall be deprived of all; and, like the poorest of mankind, go down to the dust, where all distinction, of this sort, is lost for ever! And how must they look down upon those unhappy creatures, whose breasts swell, whose imaginations are intoxicated with such pageantry! How ridiculous must the bustling of mortals, the incessant labours of head and hand to obtain such distinctions, appear in man, *who is a worm, and the son of man who is a worm?*

Again, what can they be supposed to think of the toils of the avaritious? toils incessant, and which know no bounds? When men, who can need no more than food  
 and

and raiment, yet have their whole hearts **SERM.**  
and active powers engaged, in adding **IX.**

sum to sum, merely for the sake of holding and possessing, and not at all for use!

*loading themselves*, as the prophet speaks,  
*with thick clay*; or, at best with what be-

comes a more dangerous idol to them,  
than any golden calf could be; and of-

ten proves a snare and curse to their de-  
scendants as well as to themselves! In

acquiring, and in hoarding, the sons of  
misery labour out their days; but quite

inattentive to the true purposes of hu-  
man life, for which they were sent into

the world. Nay further, by thus *with-*  
*holding more than is meet*, they sadly vio-

late those Laws of God by which all, who  
are possessed of abundance, are laid under

obligations to give for the relief of such as  
are in want. And, very probably, few

there are of the sordidly covetous who do  
not break through the rules of common

justice, as well as those of generosity and  
compassion; either wronging or defraud-

ing their neighbours as they have oppor-  
tunity, or oppressing those who are any

way in their power. You blessed spirits,  
with what indignation must you be sup-

R 2

posed

SERMON. posed to look down on human life, so conducted! Upon human powers and faculties, so prostituted! how little significant that property, and those possessions, whose only use must terminate with the short course of mortal life; having no relation to a man's state hereafter, farther than as the good or bad use of them, in this world may make that state happy or miserable!

Again, to mention but one other instance, how must these superior spirits look down on the character and conduct of the voluptuous, who live only or principally, for the sake of sensual pleasure; which is the divinity they serve, and their portion and chief good under the sun! Nay, all men of a liberal and generous taste, look with contempt upon this character; and, in truth, to the discerning, it can never appear other than infamous and contemptible. In what a light then must they see it, who are placed above the sphere of sensual joy intirely? God has planted appetites in us suitable to our state and circumstances upon earth; and he hath provided proper gratifications for them. These were intended not only to put men upon supplying

supplying the necessary demands of nature ; but to minister to our delight, to sweeten life, and render it comfortable ;

and all acknowledge that the gratification

of natural appetite, within the bounds of

temperance and virtue, is perfectly in-

nocent ; not only so, but to enjoy the

gifts of divine bounty with chearfulness,

may be called an expression of gratitude to

the donor, and of our being pleased with

his administration ; whereas, when the

effeminate and luxurious taste leads men

to transgress the laws of temperance ;

when they prostitute and debase their own

powers, and pollute themselves with the

grosser vices of sense, then indeed they

become a reproach to the rational and

moral nature ; and while they act a shameful

part, act, at the same time, a ruinous one.

When we consider, how such a course of

life must appear to the beings above us,

it must be attended to, that those appe-

tes which our Creator hath planted in us,

however in our present state necessary,

yet are really marks of our imperfection

and infirmity ; without which they could

have no place at all in our frame. Now,

to make that the object of our chief at-

tention,



SERMON. tention, and our chief good, which is in

IX. its own nature a monument of our weakness, is undoubtedly to contradict nature in the most opprobrious manner. We are endowed with noble powers, powers enabling us to tread in the footsteps of angels, and to participate in their exercises and entertainments; but these the voluptuary neglects, resting, as his ultimate end, in those pleasures which are common to us with the brutal kinds. What can be a prophanation of human nature, if this is not? Let us only reflect how the angelic orders must look down on all those things which the votaries of pleasure place their happiness in; and what distress they would account it to be united, we may say, thrust down into a body like ours! they possess much nobler powers, much more refined delights; and to them a state the most eligible we can suppose upon earth with respect to pleasure, would be distress and suffering. Should we not attend to this? One cannot easily suggest a consideration which more effectually tends to wean the thinking mind from all sensual excesses, than that the orders of beings above us, who surely are much more per-

fect and happy than we are, not only have SERM.  
no dependence on such pleasures, but are IX.  
probably absolute strangers to them. Here

every one who believes the existence and superior happiness of such beings, has a demonstration that the joys of mind are far superior to those of sense; and when a conviction of this is thoroughly impressed on the heart, then will the clamours of sensual appetite be little attended to; its gratifications, now less esteemed, will by degrees cease to excite so much of our care or of our joy.

Let us now, on the other hand, imagine how a suffering and calamitous state must appear in the view of these superior beings. That they are good and friendly to mankind we are most certainly informed. That they have a knowledge of the distresses of mankind, there is no reason to doubt: But then as we cannot conceive that creatures intirely unembodied, (if that be really their case; which however some very wise men have greatly questioned) can have any sense of what bodily pain is; so their sympathy with us, must be something exceedingly different from that affection in the human heart.

R 4

This

SERM. This sympathetic affection, to answer its  
 IX. end, must be strong; and we know it  
 is in some cases attended with very great  
 pain; insomuch that the sympathizer, were  
 the thing possible, would be very glad to  
 transfer the pain from the sufferer to him-  
 self. In such case, though it is hard to  
 imagine that these pure and happy spirits  
 have any such pain as we feel in sympa-  
 thy; yet they may, and no doubt, do feel  
 a tenderness and compassion suited to  
 their state; and such as is not incon-  
 sistent with the undisturbed calm of their  
 minds.

The sufferings of good men for instance,  
 in the cause of truth and virtue, must be  
 matter of pleasing contemplation to them;  
 and such sufferers themselves, objects of  
 their high delight: For this is, in truth, the  
 most honourable and illustrious light in  
 which human nature can appear; and they  
 well know that these light afflictions, which  
 are but comparatively for a moment, work  
 for the sufferer a far more exceeding and  
 eternal weight of glory: So that while they  
 compassionate what good men endure;  
 yet they must be supposed, at the same  
 time, to rejoice on their account, and to  
 have

have a clearer view than men can have, SERM.  
of the crown of righteousness which is in IX.  
reserve for virtue. So likewise, all good  
men who suffer in the common calamities  
and evils of life, while they do honour to  
their Maker by a meek resignation to his  
will, and a confirmed patience, must  
be objects of delight to these good spirits :  
For such excellent and happy beings,  
have, unquestionably such clear concep-  
tions of God's government; of the wis-  
dom, and righteousness, and goodness of  
his administration, as perfectly to acqui-  
esce in it; they must foresee a most happy  
and desirable end; so that whatever con-  
cern they may have for the good, who at  
present suffer, yet they must, at the same  
time, be perfectly pleased with the whole  
scene, and that the will of the infinitely  
wise and good parent of the universe,  
should be always done.

Such then, we may suppose are the sen-  
timents of those superior excellent spirits,  
concerning our present state. And no  
man surely who shall attend to what hath  
been suggested on this subject, will ask,  
what concern we have with their senti-  
ments concerning us, or what it can avail



SERM. us to know how they are affected? For

IX. you see both from scripture, and from  
 what we may rationally conjecture of  
 their state, and their views of our  
 world; that excellent hints may be  
 taken for regulating our own conduct  
 and affections; even with a view to the  
 approving our temper and behaviour to  
 them; who, we have reason to believe,  
 are conversant among us, and much em-  
 ployed about our affairs.

But there is still a better reason for en-  
 deavouring to conform our sentiments to  
 theirs; namely, that in a little time, we  
 shall be divested of body; and rise to a  
 state, in that respect, resembling theirs:  
 Quite cut off from all communication  
 with the present body; and removed  
 far, as from all the pains, so from all  
 the joys and pleasures of this bodily  
 state. Most fit it is then, that we  
 should exert our utmost care to prepare  
 for that state, and to acquire that way of  
 thinking, which is suitable to it. This  
 great change which shall come to pass  
 when we have put off this body, is to  
 good men the object of joyful expectation  
 who know that they shall be better and  
 happier

happier, when they are removed from SERM.  
 this scene. This they are taught in the IX.  
 holy scriptures; they have, in themselves,   
 the principles of that life which is truly  
 angelical; and have, even here, foretastes  
 of its joys. From the love of God, and  
 of goodness; from purity of heart and  
 life, from the pleasing approbation of con-  
 science, from a perfect satisfaction with  
 the measures of God's government, from  
 being kindly affectionate, and from doing  
 good; from all these, certain joys and plea-  
 sures flow, far more substantial and solid  
 than any thing which their external senses  
 can yield, or their outward state in this  
 world, be it as great and prosperous as can  
 be imagined; and they know that it is  
 better for them *to be absent from the body,*  
*and present with the Lord.*

But whether men are prepared for this  
 great change, in their state, or are not;  
 yet it will most assuredly come; and *from*  
*the warfare of death there is no discharge.*  
 The time hastens when the greatness and  
 power, the pomp and splendor, of high  
 life, shall be, to the present possessors of  
 them, no more for ever; when the trea-  
 sures of the wealthy shall be no more to  
 him,

SERM. him, than if they had never existed ; when

**IX.** the whole apparatus for sensual pleasure, shall be annihilated ; when men shall go into a state quite new, and eternally separated from all things sensual and earthly ; then must they be sensible of, then must they feel the justness of those sentiments concerning this world, and its joys and sorrows, which have been in this discourse laid before you.—They must feel, and that will give thorough conviction, that things external and sensual were never intended to be the portion, and chief good, of such a creature as man ; they will feel that all these things are, in reality, vanity and vexation of spirit ; that the children of this world, with all their pretences to wisdom and penetration, have acted under the influence of a continued most gross delusion ; now when they find themselves removed into a state where nothing that was before their happiness, is to be enjoyed, this conviction must, with irresistible force, take possession of them. Besides, let us suppose that, with all this, they have no taste nor relish for the pleasures of a nobler kind, in which angels and the perfect spirits of the just are happy ; then they

they must be in a poor and wretched state S E R M.

indeed! But especially it must be so, if IX.

they carry along with them into the world of spirits, strong desires after the enjoyments of this life, which are never to be gratified; and surely it is no irrational or unphilosophical thing to imagine this; nay, there is considerable probability of it; then how deeply must they suffer! Can any thing give greater torment than strong desires never to be gratified? what must become of such as have made power and authority, riches and wealth, or sensual pleasure and joy, their idols on earth; and continue to have as earnest longings after them as ever, now when they are forever separated from them? certainly were there no positive punishment to be inflicted on them, this itself must render them completely wretched. Thus then, we see that those sentiments concerning this world, and the things of this world, to which reason and the holy scriptures direct us, are sentiments which, however they are neglected now, and that men act in direct opposition to them, will yet one day, force themselves upon us, and will prevail: So that if we are not capable of the life of angels,



SERM. angels, we shall become very miserable,

IX. as men.

The conclusion of the whole, is, that we should by all means labour to get into, and to cultivate that temper and taste, which is necessary to fit us for that state into which we shall most assuredly go; and in which our happiness, or misery, shall undoubtedly be very great. *If we are risen with Christ, let us seek those things which are above, where Christ is at the Father's right hand; let us set our affections upon those things which are above, and not on things on this earth.*—Thinking and acting, as persons who are crucified and dead to the world.

The greatest, and an absolutely necessary means to this end, is to imprint on the mind a deep conviction that the holy and divine life is the most excellent; and that in the pleasure it yields, we shall really find ourselves more happy and satisfied, than in the most exquisite provision which can be made for our entertainment in things external and sensual. This I would very much insist on, and earnestly exhort you to seek after true happiness; to choose, and pursue that good, which we

on the whole, admit to be the greatest. SERM.

Why then do we not all, without excep- IX.

tion, pursue after that life and state which may indeed be called angelical? we acknowledge, in speculation, that it is the best; but with many alas! this is all. But if men will look into their own hearts, they will find there the source of that dis-temper by which they are alienated from the life of God. It is a suspicion and distrust that they cannot be happy in it; that it is not substantial, and satisfactory: And surely, till this prejudice be rooted up there is no good to be done: In all our attempts in religion and virtue, we shall be like men on a journey, the end of which they hate; and so every step is worksome and against the grain. Now, one of the most familiar and obvious methods of reasoning with our own minds, upon this great point, is this; that those orders of being which are far superior to us, must be, in proportion to their advancement, happier, and have a higher enjoyment of existence than we have: Yet we are sure that this is independent of a bodily state such as ours, and of all its joys. We are  
also

SERM. also sure at the same time, that we have

IX.  those powers and principles in us, which make us capable of a participation with them, in the highest kind of joys: must we not then be perfectly assured, that in these joys we shall find ourselves most happy? That all the prejudices by which we are led to think otherwise, are most unjust and unnatural; that they ought as such, to be renounced; and that we never can act our part well, while any such wild imaginations have power over us. But then we are diverted from the source of our highest happiness; cut off from the fountain of living water, and, in the prophet's language, may be said to hew out to ourselves broken cisterns which can hold no water.

But especially to serve this great end we ought to feel it constantly at heart deeply rooted there, as a principle never to be contested, that our highest happiness does not at all depend on an embodied state; let us therefore keep a strict discipline over our appetites, of every kind never exceeding the bounds of temperance never indulging in any irregular or forbidden

den gratifications: but instead of these **SERM.**  
animal appetites, which shall perish with **IX.**  
the body, let us cultivate, with the utmost  
care, all good affections, and those pure  
pleasures of mind, which shall never  
decay.



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# SERMON X.

The cares of human life, how far they shall cease in a future state, and how this consideration ought to regulate and moderate them at present.

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ECCLESIAST. 2. 23.

*For all his days are sorrows, and his travel grief; yea his heart taketh not rest in the night. This is also vanity.*

SERM. X. **T**HE principal subject of the former discourse was the angelic state. Where we, in some measure, saw how far reason directs our conjectures concerning the existence of orders of being superior to us; beings of a purer and more excellent nature, perhaps, wholly unembodied

bodied ; and it was observed, that the wise S E R M.  
antients of all nations, had an idea of such X.

beings, and believed their existence. I  
took notice also of the clear and full proof  
of this from the holy scriptures, and gave  
a summary account of what they teach  
concerning the angelic state, their orders,  
the vast numbers of them, their history,  
and the fall of many of them, from their  
original purity and innocence, into a state  
of very great guilt and misery. It was  
shewed likewise what the holy scriptures  
teach us of their being conversant in our  
world, and employed about its affairs ;  
which naturally led to that which was the  
principal subject, namely, what their sen-  
timents might be supposed to be, concern-  
ing our present state and affairs ; con-  
cerning the moral characters of men, and  
their pursuits, either after virtue, which is  
the great aim of the good ; or, after great-  
ness and power, wealth and sensual plea-  
sure ; in some or other of which men who  
are utterly negligent of virtuous pursuits,  
find, or at least seek, their paradise, and  
supreme good : these were particularly in-  
sisted on ; and for this reason, that the  
time will certainly come, and that very

**SERM.** quickly too, in which we shall find our-  
**X.** selves in a state like that of angels, in this respect, that we shall be divested of body and shall leave behind us, for ever, all sensual pleasures, all our worldly possessions, all the pomp, splendor, and power, which upon earth are so dazzling; that we shall then be thoroughly and irresistibly convinced of, for we shall feel, the justness of those sentiments which superior beings have of our present state; that it is perfectly fit we should now entertain these sentiments, in which in a state of separation from body we shall certainly find ourselves, and that this would be exceedingly profitable to us. On these subjects several reflections were made, which shall not now be repeated. In the meantime, that way of thinking very naturally leads the mind to another subject, which may be very usefully considered in the same light; with respect to which also, we shall most certainly think the same way when in a separate state, and become like the angels of God; the subject I mean, the cares and solitudes of our present state: To these no man can be an utter stranger; and some men groan under

*they shall cease in a future state, &c.* 261

daily oppression by them. *For what, saith* SERM.  
*the wise preacher, hath man of all his la-* X.  
*bour, and of the vexation of his heart where-*  
*in he hath laboured under the sun? For all*  
*his days are sorrows, and his travel grief;*  
*yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night,*  
*this is also vanity.* Of this how many  
thousands have a most painful experience?  
their thoughts very much on the rack;  
anxiously solicitous about what may be-  
fall them hereafter; or else, eager in form-  
ing, in prosecuting their designs, and in  
working their way to the ends they have  
in view.

We should the rather enter on the con-  
sideration of this subject, as such care-  
fulness, accompanied often with a very  
painful anxiety, seems to be in a peculiar  
manner the portion of mankind. If we  
attend to the orders of life beneath us,  
they seem to be free from all solicitude a-  
bout the future stages of life, about what  
may come to pass to them in it, or how  
provision shall be made for the supply of  
their necessities. *Behold, says our blessed*  
*Lord, Mat. 6. 26. Behold the fowls of the*  
*air, for they sow not, neither do they reap,*  
*nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly fa-*  
*ther*



SERM. *ther feedeth them.* They take no thought

X.  about futurity ; contented with what, in the common course of providence they are furnished withall. It is true, some of the animal kinds seem, to us, to act with great care and foresight. Every one knows how the ant and the bee lay up in summer, that provision which is necessary for their subsistence in winter : And we see how wonderfully the feathered kinds provide nests for the hatching, and preserving their young. However, it will, I believe, be readily granted, that all this pains of these several kinds of creatures, to provide future conveniences, and against future want, is not owing to any forethought of future events, or any deliberation and reasoning concerning them ; but to that natural instinct by which, in the whole course of life, they are directed ; and which, indeed, where necessary for their direction, works in a manner as exact and effectual, as the strongest reason and the most consummate wisdom of mankind ; nay, much more so : but then, out of that particular tract, is of no sort of service. What this instinctive power is, we need not here particularly

larly inquire: But in general, it must be **SERM.**  
ascribed to their maker, and is a directive **X.**

power infused by him. Accordingly, the inferior animals pursue the uniform guidance of instinct; but of deliberation and reasoning, or of care and solicitude about what shall come to pass, they do not discover any visible traces of it. And surely, as little can we imagine such carefulness to have place in the angelic world. Pure spirits are above all the objects of it; above all dependence for subsistence, or enjoyment, upon any precarious events; they want no food or raiment; they have no apprehensions of sickness or disorder; nor therefore, any solicitude about the methods of preventing, or removing it. They have no fear of adverse events; they have no families or offspring dependent upon them, to be the objects of their concern. In a word, their state as far as we can conceive of it, is far above all those things which to the human kind are matter of care, and painful solicitude: Nor can we imagine any thing which should be the object of care to them; but that they may faithfully execute the commands of their supreme Lord, and maintain their integrity,

SERM. grity, and loyalty to him; but this, one  
X. would think, should be an object to them  
of attention, rather than of uneasy care; especially as we suppose them to be in a confirmed state, and out of all danger of falling; such a state as the spirits of the just arrive at, who shall never sin, but be for ever holy and happy. Such carefulness, then, seemeth to be peculiar to man; and that in his present state only: nor is it unfitly a part of our constitution; because we are endowed with a kind of a prescience of many future events, in which we are concerned; of many exigencies which must be provided for; we have means put into our hands of supplying them, and powers given us to use those means, under the direction of reason and understanding: these higher powers therefore, not mere instinct, are to guide us. Now in such a frame it was fit, one may say necessary, that care should make a part, as an incentive to us to apply our powers in the proper manner; and that each may successfully discharge that trust of himself, so to speak, into which every man is committed by his Maker. In the brutal orders instinct supplieth the place  
of

*they shall cease in a future state, &c.* 265

of reason, and of incentive too ; in man, SERM.  
reason to direct him in the application of **X.**

his powers, and foresight of his wants, powers more excellent than mere instinct, are given to serve the purposes of life : But in aid of these, care and concern were superadded, to excite men to the exercise of those powers which God hath endowed them withall : And indeed, to be without all care and concern, about the present and future stages of life, to live in a state of utter indolence, and neglect of what may befall ourselves and others committed to our care ; is so far from being virtuous and commendable, that it is an exceeding bad, a most contemptible character : It is a character quite out of nature, most absurd, and, in the present condition of human life, most hurtful and ruinous.

Now, in considering the cares of human life, which are very various and very many, after, first, giving a general and comprehensive view of them, I shall, in the second place, consider how far they must be supposed to cease, when men go into a state of separation from body, and are, in that respect, like



SERMON. like the angels of God in heaven ; and

X. then, lastly, shew what assistance this subject furnishes for the direction of our present conduct, and the regulating of our tempers.

First then, the objects of human care are very many and very various. We are here in a state of discipline and trial we know, both by reason and revelation that our future state will be according to our behaviour in this world ; and *that as a man soweth, so also shall he reap.* The greatest of all cares, then, is that of conducting life so as we may come to an honourable conclusion of it, and be for ever happy : but the means of attaining to this, our maker hath most liberally furnished us with ; and given us every opportunity of working out our own salvation. So that the greatest concern we can possibly have in life, is how to do this successfully ; nothing else is worthy of being laid in the ballance with it ; for undoubtedly, things temporal are of little or no moment, when compared with things eternal : but upon this, which, it is the most important, so is the most obvious

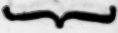
*they shall cease in a future state, &c.*

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obvious of all points, I shall not need to SERM.  
enlarge. X.

Farther, the cares which arise out of our present state are almost innumerable. What we shall eat, what we shall drink, and wherewithal we shall be cloathed, is a care which all men, more or less, know. Men are so made, and under such a constitution, that if they are not provided for by those who have gone before them, they must owe the necessary supports of life, to their own labour and industry : Under this head likewise, are comprehended not only our cares for procuring the necessaries of life, but whatsoever relates to decency, and dignity in it, suitable to that station in which providence hath placed us ; and indeed a regard to this, which is far from being blameable, nay, when kept within proper bounds, is a virtuous and praiseworthy disposition ; yet still it produces a great many cares, with which the mere subsistence of life hath nothing to do. Again, acting our part in life well, and so as the generally established law of reputation requires, in order to obtain a good character, and the esteem of the neighbourhood ; is a matter of very just concern,

SERM. cern, to an ingenuous mind. But, as

X.  there are many good things to be procured by the proper application of the powers which God hath given us ; so, there are many evils to which we are daily exposed, and which are the objects of fear and painful apprehension, to be in like manner, avoided ;—evils to which the bodily frame is subjected ; such as, pains and disorders innumerable ; which every man should do his utmost to escape, if they can be escaped ; or, to remove them when they are actually incumbent ; misfortunes again, which affect the outward state and circumstances, or which may hurt a person's character and reputation, thus interrupting his peace and enjoyment. To many such evils we are all liable ; and it is the province of prudence and discretion to foresee, and prevent them, if they can be foreseen, and prevented ; or to remove them ; at least to alleviate them, if they cannot be removed.

But still farther, a man's merely personal concern in human life, and what shall befall himself only, may be to him a very inconsiderable care, when compared to what arises from tenderness in the nearer ties of consanguinity and friendship

*they shall cease in a future state, &c.*

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ship ; especially with respect to those SERM.  
whom nature hath placed in a state of X.  
dependence upon a person, and whose support and well-being must in a great measure rely upon him. In this case, a person's care is multiplied by a diversity of objects ; many of whom may give him a deeper concern than any thing affecting only his own personal state. What cares, for instance, are children to an ingenuous and affectionate parent ? that they may happily be introduced into the world, with a fair reputation and character ; that they may be reputably settled ; and so also with respect to near and dear relatives, and highly esteemed friends. Such cares are indeed many, and to the most affectionate, which are generally likewise the worthiest spirits, they, I believe, often give much more pain, than any mere personal concern could do. Many men suffer much more for others, than they possibly could do for themselves. And, were the thing possible, would transfer the burthen off those others, to themselves.

But beside all this, there is a public, there is a community, which, to the good and worthy, will be matter of deep concern ; and above all, there is the general cause  
of



SERM. of truth and virtue, which a good mind  
 X. will ever feel nearest at heart. Now, all these  
 are cares, which providence has allotted to  
 the sons of men to be exercised therewith.

And, before we dismiss this head, let  
 us make the following reflections upon  
 them. It has been observed that such care  
 is a necessary part of the constitution of  
 man, a necessary incentive to the exertion  
 of the powers God hath given us, for the  
 procuring of good, and the avoiding of  
 evil: And our care is certainly natural, and  
 virtuous, when it only rises to such a de-  
 gree as is necessary to answer this end:  
 But alas! our cares are, in many cases, un-  
 natural, absurd, and indeed ridiculous. Men  
 are seen sometimes to make that the ob-  
 ject of their solicitous concern, which is  
 absolutely out of their power; and where  
 it is impossible by any application of  
 theirs, to make the least alteration in the  
 state of what they are concerned about—  
 as impossible, as it would be for them to  
 alter the ordinances of heaven, or to arrest  
 the motion of the stars. Now, this is an  
 absurd vanity; and it is the province of  
 true wisdom, as much as possible, to pre-  
 vent and check it. The truth is, what is  
 abso-

*they shall cease in a future state, &c.*

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absolutely out of our power, ought as **SERM.**  
absolutely to be out of our care: For, of **X.**

such care, we may be clearly convinced, by the least attention, that there is, there can be no end, in any sense of that word; because its objects may be without number; and there is no good purpose can possibly be served by it. Again, when our care has so much anxiety in it, as destroys our activity, and, instead of disposing us to exert our powers for the avoidance of evil, or the procuring of good, rendereth us utterly unfit for action at all; prostrating the powers and vigour of the mind; in such case, it is evident that our care is only hurtful to us; and such is too often the case: Just as fear, which often arises to such a degree, that instead of arousing men to repel danger, it utterly disables them from acting at all. Against such vain cares we ought to bend all our powers of reason and religion; ever considering them as most unfriendly to our peace and quiet: And surely, it is wise in us to labour as much as possible, since they cannot procure what we wish, that they may not invade our repose. Farther, our cares are exceedingly culpable, and speak indeed

SERM. indeed a bad state of mind, when they

X. bear no sort of proportion to the real value of their object; when things comparatively of little value, engage, perhaps engross our concern, while things of much greater moment are neglected. This, in the common affairs of life, is very great indiscretion; and cannot fail of being very hurtful: Much more, in matters of religion, it works remediless mischief; it shews impiety and disregard to the divine authority; while, at the same time, it betrays the greatest folly and weakness with respect to ourselves. And yet alas how often is this the case? Persons are careful and troubled about many things while one only, in comparison, is needful and that one is neglected, by a kind of infatuation. Strange, that men should be thus attentive to every thing, but their proper business as reasonable creatures, and moral agents!

Having thus given a general view of those cares which are allotted to the children of men, the necessary attendants of human life; and having made some observations upon them; let us, in the next place, consider how far they shall cease when

*they shall cease in a future state, &c.*

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when men go into a state of separation **SERM.**  
from body, in this respect become like the **X.**

angels of God in heaven. And here it is obviously the most important circumstance, that we shall then be delivered from all painful cares about our salvation. There will be no more danger of coming short of the terms of our acceptance with God; of falling by temptation, from what we have already attained; or of being betrayed into negligence of our duty. All such dangers end with our state of trial and discipline, to return no more for ever. Men then enter into a state of rest, with the perfected spirits of the just; the sure pledge of a gracious acquittal, at the great day of judgment. At the time of our removal from this world, faith shall terminate in vision; and hope, in the enjoyment of what God hath laid up for those who love him and his appearance.

Again, at death, it is plain that all our cares of which the bodily state, its wants and dangers, are the object, shall cease for ever. No more anxiety about what we shall eat, or what we shall drink, or wherewithal we shall be clothed! No longer any trouble to maintain a dignity of station, or rank, in the

**VOL. II.**

**T**

**world;**



SERM. world; or about preserving esteem and  
 X. reputation in it! No farther concern a-  
 bout preserving the body from distress and  
 danger; or delivering it from evils which  
 are actually present! No concern then  
 about what may come to pass in the de-  
 cline of life, in the decays of old age!  
 And surely it is a pleasing speculation to  
 think of the time when we shall get fi-  
 nally rid of all these vexatious things;  
 enjoying an absolute independence on all  
 the circumstances and events of mortal  
 life!

But shall we indeed get clear of all the  
 cares of mortal life? Can it be that men  
 shall not carry with them the remembrance  
 of the circumstances in this life and of  
 their relations in it? This can hardly be  
 supposed to be the case. And if they shall  
 carry with them some of the best and most  
 pleasing affections of the human heart;  
 must they not also be supposed to feel that  
 tender regard, that anxious concern, for  
 those now left behind, which prevail'd  
 while they had a part in this present scene?  
 Shall parents, and those who have been  
 attached to others in the closest and most  
 sacred bonds, become at once, forgetful,

blow

T

II. and

*they shall cease in a future state, &c.* 275

and utterly negligent, of those who, SERM.  
through the course of a long life, have X.  
been most dear to them? Now, here, I  
freely own, our thoughts seem to be not a  
little embarrassed; and to give a clear and  
full solution to such questions, would re-  
quire our knowing, with greater precision,  
the oeconomy of the world of spirits, than  
is possible for us while upon this earth.  
However, I shall venture to suggest a few  
conjectural remarks, and the rather as  
they will lead us to some reflections,  
which in our present state may be exceed-  
ingly useful.

In general, as to those appetites and  
affections, merely suited to a bodily state,  
and which can be of no use when we are  
out of it, it is not to be conceived that  
such shall remain with us. For example,  
of what use the appetite of hunger, when  
no animal life remains, to be taken care  
of by means of it? And have we not the  
same reason to believe, that with the bo-  
dily state, all appetites shall cease, when  
those bodily organs, the immediate causes  
of the sensation, are no more? May we  
not easily imagine, that our frame shall  
undergo such an alteration, as that some

SERM. of the social affections, particularly suited

X. to our present state, and which had a strength and ardor in them, which made them powerful and effectual incentives to promote the interest of our relations and friends; that some of these affections, I say, when the ardor of them can be of no more use, shall cease to operate as they now do, and ought to do: For if this should be the case, it would be not at all a defect; but on the contrary, a desirable circumstance in our state. And indeed, should we suppose, that, in a separate state, some of the worthiest and most beautiful affections should operate as they now do, we must imagine that state a very unhappy one. That calm dispassionate benevolence which is here the very likeness of God upon the heart, cannot be supposed, in a state more perfect than this, to be diminished; nay, it will no doubt gain strength, as that moral perfection, to which it is essential, shall advance: But then there is no reason to think this will be the case, with respect to the tender affections peculiarly adapted to our present state. And if these are diminished, yet so as that nobler and more angelic

*they shall cease in a future state, &c.*

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angelic affections take place, which is SERM.  
to be supposed, still the mind will be X.  
in a better and more desirable state;  
now become more like the higher orders  
of being; or rather more like to the  
great Parent of all being. It may be  
added, that we may well suppose the at-  
tention so engaged to more excellent and  
important objects, than are in this world,  
that what concerns this world, if at all an  
object, shall yet, comparatively, become a  
very inconsiderable one. Let but a good  
man reflect on his own spirit and temper  
in this life, when he is thoroughly engaged  
in divine objects; and surely he will then  
find himself in the best and most desirable  
state: A state, which indeed, doth not extin-  
guish the affections, or those cares which are  
their necessary attendants; but that such  
engagement of the spirit makes them cease  
to be, at present, painful; producing a  
pleasing tranquillity, which the passions  
of humanity cannot greatly disturb, while  
the mind is in that state. And surely,  
much more may we suppose the mind  
free from all painful care, while it is *filled*  
*with all the fulness of God*; and when those  
affections, here the sources of painful care,

T 3

shall



SERMON shall be on the other hand, without that

X. force and energy, which are necessary in this life. When moreover, all objects of temporal concern shall appear as nothing compared with those spiritual and divine enjoyments which will command our utmost attention of soul. But what most of all deserves to be insisted on is, that, in a separate state, a state of much higher perfection than our present, there must be supposed such clear views of God's government, such an high sense of the goodness and perfect wisdom of it, as will effectually dissipate all uneasy cares about such interests and persons, as were in this world dear to men; and this, even though they should still have a clear remembrance of them, and their circumstances; or ever so full and comprehensive a view, of what their exigencies and dangers in life, may be. The perfect government of God is a foundation of perfect tranquillity, and peace of mind; when persons have a clear view that all things are ordered just as they should; that nothing cometh to pass, by divine appointment, but what ought to come to pass, and what therefore they must cordially acquiesce in: when they have an assurance of  
this,

*they shall cease in a future state, &c.*

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this, so full and strong, as no prejudice, **SERM.**  
no humour can break in upon, no weak- **X.**  
ness of affection cloud, then will the  
mind rest perfectly satisfied, and all pain-  
ful and solicitous care utterly vanish. The  
universal Parent of all is there seen, (seen  
doubtless in another manner than on this  
earth) ordering the affairs of every indi-  
vidual of his great family, in perfect wis-  
dom, and righteousness, and goodness;  
and what more can be desired? So far as  
we can rationally conjecture, this must  
be the great rest of the superior orders,  
in the universe; their eternal security  
from all painful care and solicitude; either  
with respect to themselves, and their per-  
sonal concerns, or with respect to the gene-  
ral concerns of God's universal family. And  
surely we may well suppose that, in a se-  
parate state, the perfected spirits of the just,  
shall enjoy the same kind of tranquillity, and  
built upon the same stable foundation, so  
that all painful care and anxiety shall cease  
for ever—*There shall be no more death, neither  
sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more  
pain: For the former things are passed away.*

Let us, in the last place, consider what  
improvement may be made of what has

T 4

been

**SERM.** been offered on this subject, for the regulating of our temper and conduct. Now, **X.** what is most of all to be considered, is, that we may hence learn how, in the best manner, to regulate and manage the cares of human life; whether with respect to ourselves, or others. How distressful these often are, scarce any one but knows; few but have felt: And surely no burthen is greater, or more intolerable, than they sometimes prove. Should men attempt to divest themselves intirely of all care, they would attempt what, in our present state, is quite against nature; and which, if it could be effected, would bring a person into a state very unworthy of him; would render him useless and insignificant in social life; a state indeed, which must arise from such a temper and conduct as would render him utterly unworthy of the world above. But the great point is, so to moderate and regulate our cares as to answer the end for which that carefulness, peculiar to man, was planted in our frame; that while we and others enjoy its good fruits, we may escape the grievous pains which arise from excess in it. I speak not now of cares which are utterly vain and foolish; whose objects

are

*they shall cease in a future state, &c.*

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are intirely out of our power; because S E R M.  
this sort of cares ought to be intirely sup- X.  
pressed, as they also may, by the use of  
sound reason; but of those cares which are  
natural, and necessary in our present state.

And, in the first place, undoubtedly plain  
sense will direct every man, so far as he  
hath opportunity of making a choice, to  
choose that station, and those circumstances  
in life, in which he will meet the fewest  
cares, and the least dissipation or intangle-  
ment in pursuing his natural genius.

But with respect to those cares which  
are unavoidable, we shall be best able to  
moderate them according to the hints  
already given on this subject, concerning  
the state of angels, and separated happy  
spirits of men, first, by studiously engag-  
ing our hearts and affections, to the most  
excellent and divine objects. For with  
these nothing that concerneth merely our  
present state, is to be compared. The  
apostle Paul speaks of *counting all things*  
*as loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of*  
*Jesus the Lord.* He speaks of being cru-  
cified to the world, and the world to him;  
He speaks of the sorrows and sufferings of  
this life, as utterly unworthy of being com-  
pared



**SERM.** *pared with that exceeding and eternal weight*  
**X.** *of glory, which shall be revealed in the saints;*  
 and surely the very same thing may equally be said of its joys. When men are filled with just sentiments concerning the supreme Being; his glorious perfections, and works; concerning his son Jesus Christ, and the love of the Father made manifest in him; concerning an eternal happy state, and the glory which shall be hereafter revealed; they will then assuredly, be very moderate in their attachments to this life, and to all its concerns; which all in comparison, will appear light and trifling. Besides, this state of the mind, and attachment of the heart to divine objects, does in its own nature satisfy the greatest and justest of all cares, of which our salvation is the object: For such a state is naturally attended with joyful confidence toward God, and an assured trust in him. The soul possessed of tranquillity and peace in this most important respect, will be secure from all tormenting care about other matters. This excellent spirit and temper cannot indeed be supposed, while we are in this world, to extinguish all care or the affections from which it ariseth;

but

*they shall cease in a future state, &c.*

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but then it will surely moderate such care; SERM.  
to the heir to great wealth, who has an X.  
ample and sure provision both for himself  
and those who shall come after him,  
though he will not be negligent even of  
little matters, which are just objects of  
any concern; yet he will not be greatly  
affected by them; as a person reasonably  
might, who knew no greater things; who  
had his support and well-being suspended  
on what, to the other, would be mere trifles.

Secondly, as a sure defence from all the  
painful anxieties of care, let us keep our  
attention fixed on the government of God.  
We do not indeed see him, with our bo-  
dily eyes, administering the affairs of the  
universe; we do not see him attending to  
every individual creature, or individual  
event; but we may be as sure of it, and  
that the whole world is necessarily go-  
verned by his providence; as we are sure  
of his existence. Now, this assured faith  
presents to the mind a most glorious scene;  
the divine power and wisdom, every where  
present; regulating, and directing all causes  
and events; and in a steady and uniform  
manner executing the divine counsels:  
We are likewise sure, that all these coun-  
sels

SERM. sels are perfectly wise, and good, and just.

X. Now, let but a just sense of this be impress-

ed, and abide upon the mind, and all the disquieting impatience of care will vanish.

Nothing can come to pass, in this immense family, but what is under the direction of the all-perfect parent of it:

Therefore every thing is well ordered, and will end well; and therefore his faithful

servants, commit every thing to him; on him depending assuredly, and with peace-

ful minds; in the mean time, acting their own parts, in the best manner they can,

and diligently doing the duty required of them. The apostle Paul directs us, Phil.

4. 6. *To be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication, to make our requests known to God,* And the apostle

Peter, 1st Epistle, 5. 7. *To cast all our cares upon God, for he careth for us.* It is his

province to order all things; there is nothing too hard for his power; and as he

careth for his servants, his almighty power, and supreme authority, will be engaged

on their behalf. Their own cares are comparatively but of small avail; it is

very little which is in their power. *Ex*

*cept the Lord keep the city, the watch-man*

*waketh*

*they shall cease in a future state, &c.* 285

waketh in vain. But they are safe, and **SERM.**  
therefore are intitled to peace and ease of **X**  
mind, under his protection. What be-  
side a sense of God's government, a con-  
fidence in the wisdom and goodness of the  
universal parent, not to be shaken, can  
secure the holy angels, and the perfected  
spirits of the just, in serene and undisturb-  
ed happiness? and must not this confi-  
dence, in proportion to its degree, have  
the same influence on the virtuous here,  
as on the saints in heaven? The state it is  
true, of the former, is liable to a thou-  
sand vicissitudes from which that of the  
latter is perfectly secure: Yet still the  
whole plan of things is framed and fixed  
by divine counsel; no vicissitude can come  
to pass, but what is part of the original  
counsel; in which respect our state, upon  
earth, is as really ascertained, as the state  
of those who inhabit the world above.  
In God's holy government then let us  
rest; to him commit ourselves, and all  
our concerns, as unto a faithful Crea-  
tor; who will, one day, *bring forth his*  
*servants to the light, and make them behold*  
*his righteousness.*

**SERMON**



# SERMON XI.

That the present state has a plain reference to a future invisible one, unspeakably greater and more august, and that in both, the same glorious design is uniformly carried on.

2 CORIN. 4. 18.

*While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen, for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

SERM.  
XI.

**I** HAVE, in some past discourses treated principally concerning the light in which the affairs of our world, and present state, may be supposed to appear to su-

period

perior orders of being; and endeavoured SERM.  
to make such reflections upon it, as might XI.  
be useful to us in the regulating of our {  
sentiments, and temper, and behaviour.

As we are nearly related to these orders of being, to the invisible world, the world of spirits; and as we know so much concerning it from reason and scripture as may be improved greatly to our present benefit; I hope it will be agreeable and useful, in this discourse to suggest some further considerations upon the subject; laying before you, in the first place, the plain reference which the present state and scene hath to another scene, which is at present invisible. Then shall proceed to shew you the reason there is to think that this invisible world, or scene, is much greater, and more august, than any thing our eyes now see; and thirdly, that in both, one great design is uniformly carried on by the parent of the universe; a design very worthy of the greatness and goodness of the Divine mind.

I am first then to shew, the plain reference which the present state and scene hath to another scene which is, at present, invisible. One of the most obvious inquiries

SER M. inquiries to an intelligent rational crea-

XI. ture reflecting upon himself, capable of surveying his own frame, and discerning his dependence on a power not his own, for the subsistence of his life, and his enjoyment of it, who sees at the same time that death is common to all his fellow creatures, and that he must expect, in his turn, very quickly to submit to it—one of the most obvious inquiries, I say, and, at the same time, most important, is, Whether death is the intire extinction of being; or, whether it is only the dissolution of the external frame, and the separation from it of that power in him, which is the principle of sensation, of thinking, and of all voluntary action. The person who with attention pursueth this inquiry, will find very substantial reason to determine that the latter is really the case, and that death, though it dissolveth the animal frame, hath no power over the rational and moral agent which inhabited it. He will find reason to believe that this agent is an immaterial substance, which hath no necessary dependence on matter for its subsistence; that it is a simple undivided thing, and does not seem,

seem, in its nature, liable to dissolution; as **SERM.**  
is a body, consisting of an infinite number **XI.**

of parts, which may be separated one from another; and when he cometh farther, to survey his own moral powers, and from them deduceth the relation in which he stands to the being who made him, as the subject of a moral kingdom; and seeth that he is under a moral administration, having laws written upon his heart, which are intended to direct his conduct, and that he is to expect reward or punishment, as he is, or is not, obedient to these laws; which scheme of government he also evidently sees is not compleated in the present state of things, which must needs lead him into the expectation of a state to come,—I say, when all this is considered, it will appear to him very highly probable, that at death, he shall not cease to be. However, to us Christians, this is put beyond all question, by express declarations from Almighty God. So then, at death men only change their state, and go into the world of spirits. They are no more inhabitants of this earth, but now reside in a world invisible to us; and every person that is taken from the present,



SERM. sent, is added to the numbers which are  
 XI. in that future world. Thus it hath been  
 from the beginning, and will be to the  
 end of time : It is only the infancy of our  
 being which we spend on earth, and then  
 are translated from it, to people the in-  
 visible world ; so that the earth may  
 be considered, (if you will pardon the  
 expression) as a nursery for the world of  
 spirits.

But as this sheweth plainly the refer-  
 ence of this present state, to another  
 which is invisible ; so that reference will  
 farther appear, from this most grave and  
 weighty consideration, that in the invi-  
 sible state men are to be rewarded, or  
 punished, according to the deeds they  
 have done in the body. It has been al-  
 ready observed, that though we may see  
 clearly that we are, in our present state,  
 under a moral administration ; yet we as  
 evidently discern that this scheme is not,  
 in our present state, compleated. God  
 doth not, in all cases, interpose to reward  
 virtue, and punish vice, in that manner  
 which might be expected under a perfect  
 moral administration : nay, we often see  
 what appears to us the reverse of this:

we

we see the wicked in a most prosperous SERM.  
state, while the righteous are depressed, XI.

and in most calamitous circumstances: we see the children of wisdom, the votaries of righteousness, not only suffering deeply in many instances, but we see them suffering, even for righteousness sake; nay, losing their lives in support and defence of the cause of truth, and of God. Now, these are things not at all to be expected under a perfected moral government; and for this reason we must believe that the design is not at all finished here; but that a full and perfect retribution is to be made, to every individual, in that state and world to come, which at present is not the object of sense, but of faith. And this the New Testament every where declareth. We conclude then that the scheme of things in this world, which our eyes behold, would be, without relation to the invisible world, a thing most imperfect and unfinished; in which we have only embryos which are not at all brought into compleat form.

Imagination and reflection will, upon this occasion, lead us to innumerable things

SERM. in the present system, which will appear

XI. great irregularities, if not connected with  
that invisible scenery which I have been  
speaking of. For instance, one person is  
taken off by death in the very bloom of  
life, and in all the vigour of his powers;  
at a time when he is capable of the most  
pleasing enjoyment of life. Another who  
is so loaded and oppressed with disorders,  
that he seems incapable of any enjoyment,  
and life really a burthen to him, yet liv-  
eth on from day to day, from year to year,  
when perhaps all about him, and he him-  
self too, are earnestly wishing for his re-  
lease. Again, a man of excellent abi-  
lities for serving his generation, and of  
an excellent heart, who, had his life been  
preserved, might have done much good to  
the world around him, and have proved  
an invaluable blessing to all the neigh-  
bourhood; shall be taken off amidst the  
tears and lamentations of his friends; while  
wicked and profligate creatures have their  
lives preserved, as a nuisance to all who  
come within their reach. Some persons,  
again, who by their capacities and endow-  
ments, natural and moral, seem to be  
fitted for the highest and most important  
stations

stations of life, shall spend their lives in SERM.  
neglected obscurity; while elevated sta- XI.

tions are filled with persons no way equal to them; and whose being exalted serves only to make their insufficiency conspicuous, and greatly to hurt such as are under their influence. Thus, too, we sometimes see a mind formed almost for any service that any of the species could be capable of, lodged in a body utterly incapable of sustaining labour and fatigue; so that the richest endowments of mind, by being allied to such a body, are in a great measure lost to the world; while, on the other hand, we see strength of body suited to any labour, any fatigue, but that body inhabited by a mind incapable of directing its force; so that this becometh too in a great measure useless to the world, perhaps mischievous. And so with respect to affairs and events; how many things come to pass which we pronounce to be most unfortunate; in which we can see much evil, but can discern no good arising from them. As in the state of individuals, so in the state of nations and kingdoms, and the various turns which the world undergoes with respect to them;



SERM. innumerable are the things which to us  
XI. appear very great irregularities; and we  
cannot avoid thinking them so, so far as  
the present scheme only lieth before us,  
and that if we had the administration in  
our own hands we would order them  
quite otherwise; not only so, but could  
give reasons for ordering them otherwise,  
seemingly very satisfactory. Now what  
should be the reason that he who govern-  
eth all, and to whom all causes and all  
effects are necessarily subjected, doth not  
order them as we would, and that from  
the best principles, were the power in our  
hands? The reason can be no other than  
this, that what appears to us reasonable  
and expedient, does not at all appear so  
to him. There are innumerable connexi-  
ons and dependencies of things, even with  
respect to our present state, that we know  
nothing at all of. The whole cannot come  
under our view, and therefore what to us  
may appear extremely irregular, may in  
reality be good, and useful, and necessary.  
But especially, when we attend to the in-  
visible scheme which is constantly carried  
on, to the invisible world which we are  
nearly related to, and with which this  
world

world maketh one consistent system, one whole ; we cannot but immediately conclude, that he who hath this whole in every part of it, present to him, who governs it according to an uniform design, and who is daily translating numbers from this world into the other, hath innumerable things in his view, which do not, and cannot come into our contemplation ; and therefore may see events to be most expedient, which to us appear very unfortunate. So with respect to the instance mentioned, of the removal of an excellent and most useful person, from this world ; while a wicked and most worthless person is suffered to continue in it ; who knows what station may be appointed for the good man, and what services he may be called to in the world of spirits ? Or who knows that he is not for his own sake removed out of this world, that he may be taken from the evil to come ? Or, who can tell all that may be intended by it, as an affliction and punishment to those whom he leaveth behind him ? But what I principally aim at in all that has been said upon this head, is, that the invisible world and the present are so related, and

SERM.  
XI.

SERM. so connected with one another, that they

**XI.** make one system or whole; and that in all our speculations and reasonings concerning the work of God, and the conduct of providence, this should be constantly in our thoughts, and that we are to judge of all particular events, with proper allowances for the effects unknown to us which they may have upon our present state, but especially upon the affairs of the invisible world. And when we have done so, we cannot but find reason to acquiesce in providence, in all the measures taken by that mind which superintendeth the whole, and to whom all the connexions and dependencies of each particular part, are fully known.

But, in the second place, we have reason to think that this invisible world, and its scenery, is much more august and grand than all that our eyes at present see; I may say than imagination itself can grasp. The world, the universe which we now see, is, it must be owned, exceedingly great. The earth that we inhabit, though a vast bulk, yet is but a small part of that system in which it is placed. But that system itself, however great and extended,

what

*to a future invisible one.*

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what is it when compared with the other **SERM.**  
systems, one may say, innumerable, which **XI.**  
are, by the Creator, disseminated through  
the immensity of space? The imagination  
pursuing this view of things, is most agreeably dilated, and finds in immense  
space, where there is infinite power to  
create, and infinite goodness to give birth  
to being, and to worlds, no necessary or  
certain limit to creation. But whatever  
grandeur there may be in the appearance  
of the material world, we are sure it is of  
small account, when compared with the  
excellency and greatness of the spiritual  
and invisible. The greatest bulk of mere  
matter which can be conceived, what is  
it when compared with mind, with activity,  
with power, with freedom, with moral  
agency? Let matter be supposed not  
only in the greatest quantity, but cast into  
the most beautiful and curious forms, still  
it is nothing when compared to mind, and  
the powers and affections of it. And indeed  
but for the sake of mind, we cannot  
conceive that matter could have had any  
existence; a thing perfectly useless unless  
occupied and inhabited by power and activity.



SERMON. tivity. But how excellent is mind endow-

XI.

ed with reason and understanding, with affections and active powers! This indeed is a work of God, great and magnificent. And that we may form just sentiments concerning the greatness of the invisible world, let us first attend to the number of inhabitants which may be supposed to be in it. What mighty numbers make one generation upon the face of this earth! all which at death are added to the people of the invisible world! We have been taught, and have the best reason to believe, that not one of these is lost to the family of God: their death upon earth is their nativity into another state: and if there are such vast numbers in one generation, how many must there be who have, from the beginning of this world till now, removed into the world of spirits! Who can conceive the multitude! But if this be the case with respect to this planet, what shall we think concerning the other planets in our system? Are they without inhabitants, suited to them, that is, embodied? Reason will hardly permit us to suppose this. And if there are such embodied inhabitants succeeding

ing

*to a future invisible one.*

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ing one generation after another, as S E R M,  
XI.  
upon earth, how inconceivably must the numbers grow which they yield to this great invisible world ! But when we allow our thoughts to carry us through all the material worlds which exist, through the immensity of space, no power of numbers which the imagination can any way take in, seemeth at all commensurate to the multitudes. The mind is lost in the computation. Still farther, how great and glorious the addition of the hosts of heaven, the angels, spirits perhaps which are pure and intirely unembodied, or at least, if allied at all to matter, to such as is of a nature unspeakably more subtile, than that which we know and carry about us ? How vast may the numbers of such created intelligences be, from the lowest to the highest orders of them ? How full the invisible world of such inhabitants, who can tell ? If there be any proportion, or analogy, with respect to the works of God between that world and ours, which so abounds every where with life, and action, and intelligence ; and if we may form any judgment in this particular, from the determination and disposition of the original  
infinite

SERMON. infinite power to communicate being and

XI. life, the numbers must be unspeakably great. Now, of such numbers of excellent creatures the family of God consisteth; that family which is constantly under the superintendency of the one parent; that family, to which our world is daily adding such numbers, who when they have fulfilled their course upon earth, become inhabitants of the invisible world. O how astonishing a scene is this! How great and glorious! Especially when we consider the excellent powers communicated to these intelligent beings, and the dignity of their station.

The powers of the human mind we partly know; that is, so far as they unfold themselves in our present state: For, there may be powers inherent in the mind, not yet unfolded; because, in our present state, there is no occasion for the exercise of them: Just as we see, in the several stages from infancy to our arrival at maturity there are powers displayed at certain stages, of which infancy giveth no indication. So likewise, at our removal from this into the invisible world, it is not unreasonable to suppose that powers which

*to a future invisible one.*

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which have been formerly latent, shall SERMON  
then discover themselves, and be exerted **XI.**  
upon their proper objects; with which  
objects, before their entering into the in-  
visible world, they had nothing to do.  
But, I say, we know in part the powers  
of the human mind; that they are ex-  
cellent, and matter of most delightful  
reflection to us: A man hath indeed a  
rich possession, in the possession of him-  
self. The understanding, the imagination,  
with all the delicacies of it, the memory  
which contains such a treasure, the af-  
fections, and above all the moral powers,  
when they are in a right state, exhibit a  
frame truly great and glorious; and there  
is no man but must be pleased, highly  
pleased, with existence, when he hath  
possession of human nature in a right  
moral state, But as we know not what  
new powers may discover themselves in  
the human mind, on its removal into the  
invisible world, so we know not how ex-  
cellent the powers may be of the superior  
orders of being, of the angels of God;  
and how the dignity of their station may  
rise by degrees, beyond all our compre-  
hension? Is not this invisible world then,  
consisting



SERM. consisting of such numbers as no man

XI. can number, and having such life and  
 such powers communicated to them, a  
 scene indeed worthy of infinite wisdom,  
 and goodness, and power? A good heart  
 cannot but exult in it; and rejoice in the  
 prospect of being one of these blest inha-  
 bitants. Such immensity, in which the  
 imagination is in a manner overwhelmed  
 and lost, giveth indeed a very high de-  
 light.

There is, it is true, a very obvious re-  
 flection, which may greatly damp this  
 joy; which is, that we are taught in  
 scripture, and reason leadeth us to the  
 same conclusion, that many persons in  
 this world which is invifible, shall be ex-  
 tremely unhappy; angels for instance, who  
 have by transgression fallen from their first  
 glorious and happy state; and men who  
 have been impenitently rebellious against  
 the divine authority; these shall all of  
 them be condemned to darkness and woe.  
 This is indeed a most moving considera-  
 tion. But that in which the mind may  
 and in which it must rest, is this, that the  
 matter of punishment, as well as reward  
 with respect to every individual, shall be  
 adjusted

*to a future invisible one.*

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adjusted by the righteous parent of the SERM.  
great family. And we know that there **XI.**

is nothing in him properly vindictive or  
revengeful; no delight in evil, or in the  
sufferings of his creatures. No punish-  
ment, therefore, shall be inflicted, but  
what right demands, what moral order,  
and a moral administration, render fit and  
necessary; none but what even infinite  
goodness, shall approve; none therefore,  
but what by all good minds, to whom the  
measures and reasons of the divine admi-  
nistration are fully known, must be par-  
ticularly approved; none, but what must  
by such as do not know the particulars of  
that administration, yet have a firm per-  
suasion, of the unerring wisdom and good-  
ness of God, be approved in general: So  
that the whole family of the happy  
must be most affectionately acquiescent  
in what the parent of all appointeth.  
Nor will the just punishment of the  
guilty, detract from the happiness of  
the good.

Let me add further, that as these blest  
inhabitants of the invisible world shall  
be possessed of such excellent powers;  
without all question, business and  
employ-

SER M. employment will be found for them, suited

**XI** ed to those powers: Heaven is indeed a rest for the people of God: but they must have a mean and low opinion of it and be very bad expositors of scripture who shall imagine this rest to signify a state of mere indolence and inactivity, a state which we all know is a contemptible one, quite unsuitable to the active powers of the human mind, and to the affections which are planted in the heart. There will no doubt be the highest and most perfect activity, in the most perfect state: And no wise man can imagine that what engageth the powers, shall not be of importance suitable to them. In our present state, as there are a few comparatively important stations, and a few capable of great services, so vast multitudes are in a manner confined to those lower labours, which are necessary to answer their present exigencies: Whereas it is most pleasing thought, that in the world to come, this shall not at all be the case but that the excellent powers of the mind shall be employed, in a manner suited to the dignity of them; and that to each individual in God's family, such station

*to a future invisible one.*

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and services shall be appointed, as shall SERM.  
give joy and satisfaction of the most liberal XI.

kind. What man of a good spirit could be happy in a state of mere indolence and inactivity? Or, who such could be pleased in exertions of his powers which were trifling and insignificant? But, in that boundless scene, infinite wisdom will so station the individuals, that their occupations shall be happiness to them. In the mean time, the most liberal affections, and perfectly pure, exercise themselves, towards God the Father of all, and towards their fellow creatures; while the understanding, and contemplative powers, shall be full of the most entertaining objects, and most substantial knowledge. Upon the whole, such numbers of creatures, so excellent, so employed, in such an unalterably happy state, produce a scene, in which the heart of man cannot but exult! A scene unspeakably more grand, and magnificent, than any thing in this world, in this visible universe, however great it may appear.

The third head of discourse proposed is this, that in both worlds there is one

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X

great



SERM. great design uniformly carried on, by the  
XI. parent of them, by means indeed very  
various; but, no doubt, the best adapted  
to that state of his family in which they  
are used. When we consider the original  
design of creation, our minds cannot fix  
on any thing but the communication of  
perfection, and happiness, whereon they  
can rest: This is the glory of God: Where  
a being is to himself all-sufficient, in him-  
self compleat, and absolutely independ-  
ent; to whose perfection and enjoyment  
nothing is to be added by any creature;  
we must see that no private interest can  
put him on any design, for he can have  
no such interest to serve; he cannot there-  
fore be supposed to act from any selfish  
view. Nor can we imagine the display  
of his power, and perfection, in and to  
his intelligent creatures, with a view to  
their admiration, and their praises and ap-  
plauses, is an end which should be ascrib-  
ed to God. Alas! what do men, what  
do angels, comparatively to what God  
really is, know concerning him? how in-  
significant then must their praises appear  
in his eye, insignificant, I say, to any pri-  
vate purpose or delight of his. Nor are

*to a future invisible one.*

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we ever to imagine that an infinitely SERM.  
perfect Being can have any dependence; XI.

for pleasure and happiness, on what even a man, if he hath a truly great mind, can not only, be happy without, but, upon many occasions, despise. On the other hand, how great and God-like a thing is it, to give being to such numbers of creatures, in a state so perfect and happy; to so many intelligences formed after his own image, in knowledge and active power, in rectitude and goodness! This is a work indeed worthy of infinite wisdom, and power, and benevolence. And we may be sure the original design of creation, the perfection and happiness of the beings which God hath made, is steadily and uniformly pursued, in all the works of providence; and carried on by those means which, in the various state of his creatures, are best suited to serve it. Every particular step in God's administration is subordinate to this great plan; all the events we see brought to pass, with relation to individuals, and to public communities, are parts of a design, whereof what I have now mentioned is the sum, and the thing ultimately intended. And

X 2

the

S E R M. the same hand pursueth the same intention

XI. and design, through all worlds in the universe, which, all of them, however distant from, and however unknown to one another, are yet parts or members of one whole, as such related to one another, and constantly under the superintendency of the supreme mind, which comprehendeth in one view his great work, all the parts of it, and every individual creature in it. And this glorious system, this whole of God's moral kingdom, he will conduct to all the perfection designed for it, and it will subsist eternally, under his inspection, in the most glorious state.

But who can express the greatness and excellency of this work? An intelligent creature, perfect in holiness, and happiness, is, next to the Creator, the highest thing which can enter into the human imagination. Then such multitudes of these as constitute the family and kingdom of God!—How must the hearts of the attentive be moved, and elevated, at the thought!

Let us, in conclusion, from what has been said on this subject, observe, how great and glorious the Parent of the universe

to a future invisible one.

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verse appeareth in his works, how excellent, how amiable! That eternal infinite mind, which formed this vast design, and will, in the most perfect manner, carry it into execution! It is from the invisible world, and from his moral kingdom, that we derive the highest, the most honourable ideas and sentiments, concerning God. Indeed, his visible works speak his perfections, his eternal power and Godhead: The sun, and moon, and stars proclaim them: The earth and all the creatures in it: The vast ocean, and all its inhabitants. In these we see exquisite contrivance, and infinite power---A power, which sometimes manifesteth itself with a majesty which is indeed terrible; as for instance, in the raging of the troubled ocean; in the storms, and tempests, and lightnings of heaven; in earthquakes, and other appearances, of that kind. Yet we likewise see, that *the tender mercies of God are over all his works; and that the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord; full of life in the various kinds of it; and abundantly productive of what is necessary to support it.* But still the mind is in another manner affected with the glory

SERM.  
XI.



SERM. of the Lord, considered as the Creator and

XI.

Ruler of the moral invisible world; as an inexhaustible fountain of such being, and perfection, and blessedness, as are most liberally communicated in it. How innumerable his family, all deriving from him alone, whatever can contribute to make their state glorious, and happy to their wish! Such wisdom, such power, under the constant influence of such goodness, who that attends, but must admire, and adore, and delight in? To whom then is this Being of beings to be compared? What are the highest seraphs of heaven, in such comparison? Here is greatness which commandeth the highest veneration and esteem; if these words can express the ideas and sentiments which, in truth, seem too big for utterance in any language of mortals. Here also is goodness which commandeth the greatest love. How do the whole frame and subjects of God's moral kingdom proclaim it! But here let us pause, and think with ourselves what a hateful state that human mind must be in, which is alienated from God, which can have no delight in him! Are not the prejudices by which men are so alienated,

*to a future invisible one.*

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alienated, of all things the most abomi-  
nable, the most reproachful to our na-  
ture, and most ruinous? Must we not, if

SERM.

XI.

there be the least remains of ingenuouf-  
ness, become utterly impatient of such an  
unnatural state of mind? And as to those  
lusts which give rise to all such prejudi-  
ces, with what earnestness and applica-  
tion ought they to be suppressed? Never,  
never can we act a rational or manly, a  
wise or prudent, an ingenuous and right  
and good part, until the love of our Ma-  
ker possesseth our hearts, and 'till we are  
affected as we ought to be, towards the  
infinite greatness and goodness which gave  
us being! Impiety towards God is of all  
things the most absurd and hateful; of all  
things the most pernicious. As our Sa-  
viour has declared the love of God to be  
the first and great commandment, so dis-  
obedience to this command may well be  
called the greatest disobedience; it, in  
truth, speaketh the most unnatural and  
guilty state of the mind, which can be  
imagined: For to say that infinite great-  
ness, and the most perfect goodness, in  
conjunction, are the objects of a man's  
aversion, his fixed aversion, is really say-

**SERM.** ing the most horrid thing possible concern-  
**XI.** ing him. How must the human mind be  
 fallen, how miserably fallen, before it can  
 be capable of this? What place can right  
 and truth, ingenuity and goodness, light  
 and order, generosity and liberality, have  
 in that person who can say in his heart,  
 who can wish, that there were no God?  
 And how hateful the attempts of those  
 blinded wretches, who would lead their  
 fellow creatures into a persuasion that  
 there is no such Being; and that, with-  
 out any such parent, the great family is  
 produced, supported, and governed: but  
 enough of this, which is a matter one  
 can never think of without great indig-  
 nation.

In the second place, let what has been  
 said concerning the invisible kingdom of  
 God, the immensity and infinite goodness  
 of the design which he is carrying on,  
 reconcile us perfectly to the whole of his  
 providence, and every step in his admini-  
 stration. All particular causes are in his  
 hand, and act by his direction, through-  
 out the whole universe; they are all in his  
 hand as one great machine, consisting of  
 innumerable parts, moved by one unva-  
 ried

ried power or spring, so as to answer one **SERM.**  
 great ultimate end, and to produce the **XI.**  
 intended effect. We see not the particu-  
 lars; we know not the innumerable parts,  
 and the connections of them; but we  
 are formed capable of well discerning the  
 ultimate design; And we know assuredly  
 that every cause, and every effect, will,  
 as a means, contribute towards it. We  
 are sure that he who laid the foundation of  
 this glorious living temple, will carry on  
 the building, until, as it is expressed by  
 the prophet Zechariah, ch. iv. 7. *He*  
*shall bring forth the head stone thereof with*  
*shoutings, crying grace, grace, unto it;* in  
 the joyful acclamations of thousands and  
 ten thousands. Now, when we have our  
 minds thoroughly satisfied with the great-  
 ness and goodness of this design, and the  
 strongest assurances that it shall be success-  
 fully executed; not only so, but that eve-  
 ry step in the divine administration is a  
 means of fulfilling it --- this must needs  
 perfectly reconcile us to all that God doth.  
 The truth is, when we look to the ulti-  
 mate end, one cannot but be utterly a-  
 shamed of any murmuring or dissatisfac-  
 tion, with respect to the necessary means.

Sufferings



SER M. Sufferings and calamities in a man's person,

XI. in his estate, in the death of dear friends,

and such things as these, in a manner vanish out of the imagination, when the great family of God, and his moral kingdom, are considered in the perfection and utmost glory of them. Indeed it will readily be owned, that this present scene which our eyes behold, considered without any relation to the invisible world, and to God's moral kingdom, must suggest to the mind some very great difficulties, with respect to the Divine intentions and administration; but when we are enabled, as we are especially by revelation, to pursue the great design to all the perfection and completion of it, then all difficulties vanish; and the mind is *filled with peace and joy in believing. Let us then not look to the things which are seen which are temporal, but to the things which are not seen, which are eternal; in which our spirits will find rest, and we shall be naturally filled with most dutiful and affectionate sentiments, toward the Being who made us, and consider all that he does, as perfectly right and fit.*

Thirdly

*to a future invisible one.*

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Thirdly, we see from what hath been S E R M.  
said, that the whole design which the pa- XI.  
rent and governour of the universe is  
carrying on with respect to us, as the sub-  
jects of his moral kingdom, tendeth to  
fill us with the worthiest, the most liberal  
sentiments; and these we ought by all  
means to cultivate and encourage. What  
can as much open and enlarge the heart  
of man, as the greatness and goodness of  
this design which hath been laid before  
you? What can give us such elevated  
thoughts concerning our own stations, as  
our being subjects of Gods moral kingdom,  
our being members of this glorious fami-  
ly? Is it not high honour and happiness  
to be of it? And when we consider the  
means which have been used to accom-  
plish the design, in our world, especially  
the gift of Christ to serve it, there must  
appear a greatness and liberality, in the  
grace and favour of God, which wonder-  
fully tendeth to open and enlarge the  
heart. Let us attend to these great things,  
that our minds, if I may use the expression,  
may be expanded; that we may be plac-  
ed above every thing little, and low, and  
mean. The true spirit of faith is in truth  
a glorious

**SERM.** a glorious one; and where it prevaiileth,

**XI.** will subdue and banish the spirit of this world, with all the meannesses and littlenesses of it; and all the unhallowed lusts which are in its train; so that nature shall appear, as it ought to do, in greatness of mind, in generosity and benevolence, in an heavenly temper, and meet for an inheritance in the world above.

**SERMON**

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## SERMON XII.

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The infinite importance of the love  
of God, &c.

2 THESSAL. 3. 5.

*And the Lord direct your heart into the love  
of God, and into the patient waiting for  
Christ.*

WE have an account of the apostle S E R M.  
Paul's preaching at *Thessalonica*, XII.  
in the 17th of the acts of the apostles;  
and we are told he had even in his first  
attempt, considerable success. *Of the de-  
vout Greeks a great multitude believed, and  
of the chief Women not a few.* And though  
he met with fierce opposition from the  
Jews, his constant enemies, *who set all the  
city in an uproar* on account of his preach-  
ing the Gospel in it; yet here the foun-  
dations



SERM. dations were laid of a church which, in

XII. a little time, became extremely flourish-

ing, if not in numbers yet in the character of its members, and the genuine fruits of righteousness and charity produced by them. And accordingly we find the apostle writes to them, in both the epistles, with very great affection, as a person who had the highest delight and satisfaction in them; being as he expresses it, his glory and his joy. And he often puts up his earnest prayer to God for them, that they might be enabled to continue faithful to him, might be preserved blameless unto the coming of Christ; and that they might not be moved by the many persecutions which should prove the strength of their faith and integrity. In the words that I have read to you, he prays on their behalf, for what is indeed the sum, and may be called the crown of all religion. *The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.* *The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God;* or render them straight, in opposition to all crookedness and perversion, state of mind in which all must be found who do not love God, but are enemies to

him

him by wicked works. This is the great S E R M.  
 obliquity of human nature, and the effect XII.  
 of violence done to conscience; and when  
 nature is delivered from this, and restored  
 to its proper state, then the love of God  
 will not only possess it, but prove the most  
 powerful of all principles. *And into the*  
*patient waiting for Christ*; the literal trans-  
 lation of the Greek is, *into the patience of*  
*Christ*; that patience of which he hath  
 set us so glorious a pattern, in his own  
 sufferings; and which is necessary to all  
 christians, especially in times of persecu-  
 tion, that after they have done the will of  
 God, they may inherit the promises. Our  
 translators have taken the expression in  
 another sense, as signifying a patient ex-  
 pectation of Christ's coming to deliver his  
 servants from all suffering, and to crown  
 them with eternal glory: But this differ-  
 ence is of no great moment: At Christ's  
 coming the work of patience will be per-  
 fected; 'till then the patience of his ser-  
 vants must be exercised. The strength  
 and perseverance of it is one of the rich-  
 est ornaments of their character; and as  
 the apostle James expresseth it, rendereth  
 men *perfect and entire wanting nothing*. The  
 apostle

SERM. apostle prays that the Thessalonians may  
 XII. be distinguished by this virtue, and that  
 there might be no impatience in their expectation of that great event, which should for ever put an end to all their trials.

The subjects of my discourse on these words shall be these; first, I shall shew the great importance of what the apostle prays for on behalf of the Thessalonians; that their hearts might be directed into the love of God, and the patient waiting for Christ, or, into the patience of Christ. Secondly, shew that this was a proper matter of request to God, as who can direct the hearts of his servants into his love; and thirdly, I shall conclude with a few inferences.

First, I am to shew the great importance of that which the apostle prays for, on behalf of the Thessalonians, namely, that their hearts may be directed into the love of God, and into the patience of Christ.

What the love of God is, may (like all other affections of the mind) be better known by feeling and experience, than by any definition or explanation. But in general, we know how our minds are affected with the contemplation of what is beautiful;  
 and

and we cannot, if we attend to it, but SERM.  
know, that there is a beauty and excel- XII.  
lency of the moral kind, which is as real,  
and which as naturally raises an affection  
in the heart, as the beauty of sensible and  
corporeal objects does. To this affection  
we likewise give the name of love, though  
it is in kind different from that of which  
any sensible form, which our eyes behold,  
is the object. Every man must be sensi-  
ble of a beauty and loveliness in purity of  
heart, in generosity, and cordial good-  
will, in fidelity, and in simplicity of spi-  
rit, which most powerfully engageth the  
heart, much more so than the charms of  
any object whatsoever that is corporeal  
and visible. We find that nature deter-  
mines us to esteem and love the charac-  
ters of moral agents, with whom we are  
conversant, in proportion as they are less  
or more possessed of these graces; and  
where they are in the most eminent de-  
gree, as the greatest love is due to the  
character, so a person who does not love  
it, and is not affected by a sense of any  
beauty in it, may be very justly accounted  
to be in a most unnatural state. Now we  
know that in our Maker all moral excel-  
VOL. II. Y lencies



SERMON. lencies are combined, and in their highest  
**XII.** perfection: Purity and holiness which are  
 absolutely unsusceptible of any the least  
 moral stain: For *God is light and in him is  
 no darkness at all.* In him likewise is the  
 most perfect wisdom; by which he is in-  
 variably determined to pursue the wor-  
 thiest and best ends, by the most proper  
 and effectual means. In him is infinite  
 goodness and liberality; he communicates  
 to all; he receives from none. He is un-  
 changeably faithful and true; *from ever-  
 lasting to everlasting God, without any va-  
 riableness or shadow of turning;* there is no-  
 thing in him unsteady or capricious, still  
 the same, infinitely perfect, and holy, and  
 good Being, ever acting by the same rules  
 and measures, and for the same glorious  
 ends. This Being then, whose glory we  
 are made capable of discerning, justly  
 claims our highest veneration and love.  
 These would be due to him by his intel-  
 ligent moral creatures, on account of his  
 infinite excellency, even supposing we  
 stood in no such relation to him, as in  
 fact we do; had no dependence upon  
 him, and were not under any obligations  
 to him for favours received. But it is  
 quite

quite otherwise; this glorious Being is SERM.  
the parent of our spirits, of the universe, **XII.**  
and of all good. He is most nearly re-

lated to us, for *in him we live, and move,  
and have our being.* Now, you cannot but  
know that an excellent and amiable cha-  
racter, though in an utter stranger, en-  
gageth the heart; and in a right state of  
the mind, excites love in proportion to the  
apparent excellency of it. But such excel-  
lency of character in a father is the object of  
a very peculiar affection. There is some-  
thing in filial affection different from love  
in general, something peculiarly delicate,  
and which is attended with, not a pain-  
ful, but a pleasing reverence and fear of  
offending; this is absolutely essential to a  
good character in a child; and to be with-  
out it is justly accounted monstrous. But  
I would particularly observe, that as this  
great parent of the whole moral family,  
is continually conferring on his children  
the most valuable favours, and is intending  
and carrying on their perfection and hap-  
piness, by all the methods of his provi-  
dence, and the whole of his administra-  
tion; so this, in well disposed minds,  
must beget the highest gratitude; an af-  
fection

SERMON. affection in its nature different from love,  
 XII. but which greatly tends to strengthen it;  
 and more and more to engage the spirit  
 to the glorious object. Christians especially, one would think, should know the strength of this affection above all others; to whom God has been made manifest in Jesus Christ; in whom, and the kingdom of grace administered by him, the Divine excellency and glory shines forth, in the strongest and most engaging light.

I need scarcely observe to you, that the love of God as a principle in the heart, must be supposed to produce those effects, with respect to the temper and behaviour, which all love, to persons and moral characters, in proportion to the degree of it, necessarily does produce; such as delight in the object, in meditating upon, and conversing with it; a disposition to conduct life so as that it may be pleasing to the person beloved, and that the affection may be mutual; the desire also of approbation is a necessary attendant of love; a readiness again, to serve the interest of the person beloved, and to oblige in all things, even at any possible expence to ones self. Accordingly, in  
 such

such things as these the love of God will S E R M.  
most certainly discover itself. God, in- XII.

deed, cannot be said to have any interest of his own, which we can serve. We cannot be profitable to him, as a man may be to his neighbour; but we may be capable, in some measure, of serving his cause in the world; of being instrumental in carrying on his glorious designs, and in doing good to others. All which are proper expressions of the love of God; especially our loving and doing good, as we have opportunity, to our brethren; without which the apostle John hath taught us, that all our professions of love to God are hypocritical and vain. In a word, love to God, sincere and prevailing, produces a conformity to his will in all things; and for this reason the apostle just mentioned observes, very truly, *that this is the love of God that we keep his commandments*; the truth is indeed not in us, if we say we love God, and do not keep his commandments.

But I did not mean to enlarge upon this head; let us then, having taken a general view of this affection of soul, consider the great importance of it, to which the



SERMON. fervent prayer of the apostle, in behalf of  
 XII. his beloved *Thessalonians*, does naturally  
 direct our thoughts—*The lord direct your hearts into the love of God.* Our blessed Saviour, who knew human nature, and religion, in the most perfect manner, teacheth that the *love of God is the first and greatest commandment.* And the more particularly we view this subject, we shall be the more convinced of the justness of this; and be the more satisfied of the absolute absurdity of leaving out, in a great measure, this affection of soul toward our Maker, I say, in a great measure, leaving it out of a good character, or ascribing very little to it; as if a man could be a good man, a good member of society, a worthy or a happy man, without regard and reverence, without love to his Maker.

To illustrate this matter, it is indeed almost perplexity where to begin. Must we not be all most thoroughly convinced that the love of our maker is, in itself considered, as the noblest, so the most natural affection of the soul? what more worthy, what is there to which our nature does more determine us, than to esteem and love what is confessedly excellent

lent and lovely? How demonstrative of a SERM.  
 most depraved state of mind, not to do so; XII.  
 to treat eminent excellence, and a most  
 lovely character, with neglect, much more  
 with any expressions of disregard and con-  
 tempt, or any thing which may be an  
 abuse of it? This always will be account-  
 ed disingenuous and base; and from the  
 character of which it is a part very little  
 good is to be expected. But how un-  
 speakably does our indignation at this  
 baseness of character rise, when it is con-  
 sidered, that a person made capable of  
 discerning his glory, disregards that Being  
 in whom all possible excellencies, in the  
 highest perfection, are eternally combined!  
 in whom every thing venerable and lovely  
 is summed up---That Being to whom he  
 owes his existence, his parent, his constant  
 benefactor, ever present with him, ever  
 displaying his glory and his goodness be-  
 fore him, and upon whom he is solely and  
 absolutely dependent! Not to love a good  
 and kind and tender parent, upon earth,  
 is most unnatural: to use any such ill,  
 most inexcusable; but such conduct to-  
 wards the God who made us, *in whose hand*  
*our breath is, and whose are all our ways,* is

SERM. something which language wants words  
 XII. to express. Imagine that original power  
 which gave birth to the universe, that  
 original greatness and majesty, in all  
 the glory of it, were visible to our  
 bodily eyes, and as sensible to us as any  
 external object; what deep reverence,  
 what awe, would it not command from  
 every creature? what admiration, what  
 love in every rightly disposed mind? And  
 what though this majesty and excellence  
 are not, cannot be visibly displayed to us,  
 yet surely, they are to the eye of reason,  
 most obvious; though it is little of God  
 we can now comprehend, yet we can dis-  
 cern enough to fill us with the utmost  
 possible admiration, and with the highest  
 delight. And if there be little or nothing  
 of this kind found in us, it is not owing  
 to want of natural capacity, but to want  
 of taste, and to depravity of heart; a de-  
 pravity which indeed makes an essential  
 defect; a defect by which nature is strip-  
 ped of that which may well be called its  
 highest excellence and glory. Besides,  
 what is the love of God in reality, but the  
 love of perfect righteousness and purity,  
 of

of perfect goodness and holiness, in con-  
junction with unerring wisdom and al-  
mighty power? Can we then suppose that  
a person really loveth these characters, and  
is possessed of them in any degree, and  
and yet shall not love that Being in whom  
they are, in the highest possible perfec-  
tion? Is not the inference much more na-  
tural, that if a man does not love God,  
he does not in his heart love righteouf-  
ness and purity; in other words, cannot  
at all be a worthy and good man? These  
things ought to be deeply considered, es-  
pecially by those who are favoured with  
the clearest displays of the Divine glory  
and perfection; and who are not involved  
in that miserable darkness and perplexity  
about these matters, into which the hea-  
then world was sunk. We know the God  
we are called to serve, and know that he  
is altogether excellent and lovely.

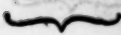
S E R M.

XII.

Again, if we consider the influence of  
this great and first principle, upon the  
moral character, the importance of it will  
appear in the strongest light. All will  
acknowledge that love has a powerful in-  
fluence in assimilating to the beloved cha-  
racter. See how, in a manner insensibly,  
we



SERMON. we contract the taste and way, and even

XII.  get into the language and gestures, of persons with whom we are much conversant, and whom we highly esteem and love. This never fails of being, in some measure, the case: And so it will be, most assuredly, with the love of God: this also will be attended with an imitation of his perfections, and a conformity of temper to his will; and this in all things; so that it will beget that integrity or intireness of character, which is essential to a good one, and the real glory of it. This blessed principle, in proportion as it prevails, will make men approve and love what God approves and loves; it will make men hate what he hateth, whatever is offensive in his eye: It will effectually suppress evil inclinations, and so will be the best preservative from temptation, destroying that in which all its force lieth. The prevailing of this principle, in a word, will make the whole man like God; and the life, an imitation of him.

Again, let it be considered how readily our active powers are employed, in behalf of those who have possession of our hearts: It is real pleasure and delight to

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of God

do them service. In labours of this kind, **S E R M.**  
the toilsome and irksome are never men- **XII.**

tioned; nay men will risque very great and imminent danger, will bear very great suffering, for such as are dear to them; nor is it at all romantic to say, that this affection of the heart will make persons capable of what no consideration of their own interest, no merely personal concern, could have engaged and determined them to. Just so, the love of God, reigning in the soul, will prepare men with great readiness to perform their duty to him; and reconcile them to any service however expensive it may be, and however attended with suffering, which may be required of them. Can it be imagined that a person who truly loves his Maker will account the offices of piety a burthen? Will the worship of God be considered as a laborious task, or will he account it weariness? Will the mere pains there is in any service, make him turn his back upon it? Whatever good is put into the power of his hand, whatever kind offices he can do to his fellow creatures, will he not do them with joy, when he does them for the sake of God, and with this particular view?

Have

SERM. Have we not all, at least heard, in many  
 XII. instances, that the love of God hath  
 prevailed over the love of temporal possessions, and of life itself; so that for the honour of his name, and the support and defence of his cause, his servants have submitted to any suffering, with great cheerfulness, and even discovered a promptness to it? So will the love of God, where it does in truth prevail, hallow all to the purposes of his glory.

And surely those services and sufferings which are performed and submitted to from a principle of love, will be acceptable; they will spring from the heart, they will be sincere. No hypocritical sentiments, no corrupt biases, or sinister view, can have any place, where the love of God is in any eminent degree. The inmost soul, in that case, will rejoice in lying open to the Divine eye; and can well approve itself to him who searcheth the heart: Such consciousness to the inward reigning principle, cannot but beget confidence towards God. There will be no fear, no slavish fear, in such love; for as the apostle John hath taught us, ch. 4. 18.

*Perfect*

*Perfect love casteth out fear; he that feareth SER M.  
is not made perfect in love. And it may be XII.*

added, under this head, that the exercise of the love of God will be naturally attended with serenity and composure of mind; and with the best use of all its powers. It is also the most effectual preservative, when in lively exercise, from that gloom and melancholy which enfeebleth the powers, rendering men indisposed and unfit for action. It will produce the most solid joy and satisfaction; and cast a pleasing light upon every thing. It is rest and refreshment of the highest kind, to the spirit. Never will any man be capable of acting his part so well, as when his mind is in the best state, in this respect.

Farther, let it be considered how the love of God will tend to reconcile the mind to the various calamities of life. And here, it must produce a most affectionate resignation to his will and submission to his providence. So the affectionate child submits to the will of a wise, faithful and tender parent, without asking any questions; as he knows that all will be wisely and well ordered, so he is sensible of



**SERM.** of a veneration for such a parent, which  
**XII.** gives additional firmness in submitting to  
 what is appointed for him: Thus when  
 believers in God, and who love him, see  
 his hand in every thing, they can in truth  
 account nothing wrong: All must be well  
 which he appoints, and all acceptable be-  
 cause he doth appoint it.

Let it be added, in the last place, that  
 as the love of God is that which, as has  
 been already said, giveth confidence to-  
 wards him, and casteth out all fear; so,  
 according to the moral constitution we are  
 under, it is the source of our highest happi-  
 ness, the immediate source of it. This is in  
 very strong terms insisted on, and much  
 inculcated, by one of the most celebrated  
 of the antients; whose main principles  
 relating to morality may be reduced to  
 these particulars, that vice is, wherever  
 it prevails, the distemper and sickness of  
 the mind; that virtue is its real health  
 and strength; and that the love of God is  
 the fountain head of the highest enjoy-  
 ment and happiness. And as this was  
 the language of nature, so it is just the lan-  
 guage of the holy scriptures. Could there  
 be, at all, a heaven without the love of  
 God?

God? Could men delight in him without S E R M.

it? Could they have any relish of that **XII.**

which is the highest happiness of the servants of God, that is, the vision of him, without love to him? Could men without this be approved of their own hearts? On the other hand, where love is perfected, there will be perfected delight; for in proportion to the degree of love, must the pleasure tasted in the fruition of the object always be. And as the love of God reigning in the heart, speaks the moral powers to be in the best and most healthful state, so, while that blessed affection makes men capable of the full enjoyment of God, the original infinite excellency, it also makes the reflecting mind pleased with itself, and absolutely secures internal peace, serenity, and joy. The importance therefore of that blessed affection, both to the moral character and the enjoyment of being, is evident. As, on the other hand, if we shall suppose the heart of man destitute of it, what is there else left which can make him reputable and happy? But especially with respect to the professors of religion who have not the love of God in them, is it not plain that

SERM. that all their religion is utterly vain? The

**XII.** very soul and spirit of it is wanting. What though men make long prayers; be they ever so exact in the ceremonial and ritual part; yet all this kind of sacrifice is abomination to that God, whom they cannot heartily love. And, in a word, if this blessed affection is not the great animating principle, men, however they may appear, are to all the intents and purposes of the spiritual life, in a state of death, and must fall intirely short of their proper happiness.

I have the rather, and the longer, insisted on this subject, that I am apprehensive it is too little, generally speaking, attended to. As to the principles laid down in this discourse, they cannot well be doubted, nor contested by any man; and yet many men do not at all seem to act under the power and influence of them. Did that one affection, which has been the subject of this discourse, prevail as it ought, we have seen what signal effects it must produce: But these are far from appearing in life, as one would wish them; especially with respect to the ordinances of religion, and the exercises of piety:

Zeal

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to him  
Vor

Zeal in these is greatly wanting; and by many they are quite neglected. There SERM.  
XII.

seems to be little taste for those entertainments of the mind, which result from the exercises of piety and devotion; and that communion and fellowship with God, of which our fathers spoke so much, is little heard of, little known. I am far from meaning to recommend an enthusiastic spirit, or religious phrenzy; or those extatic flights of mind and raptures which are without foundation; and to which some are seen to pretend, who are, in truth and reality, very worthless characters. I am only recommending that love of God, which is consistent with the most perfect soundness of mind; and which indeed naturally results from the sober and right exercise of our rational and moral powers; only recommending the highest possible esteem of, and regard to, the greatest possible excellence in that Being who is the father of our spirits, and in whom we live and have our being. And surely this is a debt to him, which the very first rudiments of reason and morality will teach us to pay. Our relation to him is as real, and to reason as evident;



SERMON. as our relation to any earthly parent can

XII. be. We know no object of our esteem

and love which is to be compared to him, for excellence; there is not, there cannot be, any character compared to him for goodness; or to whom we are under such obligation. And, as hath been already said, not to love God, must shew the most unnatural depravity of mind. Besides, in such a state it will be found that, instead of good, many bad affections have possession of the heart. Let us ever remember the words of our Saviour, *That to love the Lord with all the heart, and mind, and strength is the first and great commandment of the law; and, as such, attend to the obedience of it; casting out, with great care, every vile, and impure affection, as utterly inconsistent with the love of God; and cultivating this blessed temper, which as it is in itself excellent and right, so will prove a fruitful source of every thing worthy and happy in life.*

The next thing the Apostle prays for, is, that the hearts of the *Thessalonians* may be directed into the patience of Christ; a patient submission to those troubles and persecutions they were liable to, on account

of the christian profession, till Christ should come for their final deliverance. SERM. XII.

Christians, in those days, had especially need of patience; they were liable to the most grievous sufferings; from which their integrity was so far from being a security, that it was the thing which brought those sufferings upon them. But if their hearts were happily directed into the love of God, this would have a most happy influence in making them patient, under all the tribulation to which they were obnoxious. Patience of suffering under the hand of God, is indeed the natural attendant of love to him; that love which makes a man, and all that he hath, sacred to the purposes of his glory; that love, which will take pleasure in serving those purposes, in whatever manner God pleases; that love, which implies in it an affectionate and most pleasing sense, that, under the Divine administration, it will be always well with the good and upright; and such a firm dependence upon Divine goodness and veracity, as no temporal event, nor any the most threatening external appearances of things, can shake; such love will beget not only patience, but even joy

SERM. in suffering for the sake of God, and to  
 XII. preserve a good conscience towards him.

And, no doubt, it was to the strength of this holy affection principally owing, that so many of the servants of God, in all ages, have been seen to triumph over all the sufferings, which the enemies of their cause could inflict upon them; which might have convinced them, that it was utterly impossible, by that means, to get the better of the piety of those sufferers. But all christians, though not in a state of persecution, have at all times need of patience, that after they have done the will of God, they may inherit the promises. If they are not liable to imprisonments, to tortures, to death, yet they may be *in heaviness through manifold temptations*. This they find daily; and the state of things in this world never was, nor ever will be such, that there will not be need of patience. This virtue therefore let us cultivate; labouring after strength and firmness of mind, by a close attention to, and a fixed dependence on the principles of our holy religion; walking by faith, not by sight; and especially growing in the love of God. Remembering that the Lord will

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in due time come, and that the day of deliverance to the faithful servants of God is at hand. S E R M.  
XII.

I shall conclude with a few words upon the last subject mention'd, namely, that this was a proper matter of address and prayer to God. *The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.* The propriety of such prayers rests upon the power of the influence of the good Spirit of God, on the hearts and consciences of men; and that God can, and is most graciously disposed to give his servants assistance, in their labours after moral perfection; and in serving the great purposes of their being. This is indeed the language of nature; and it is that on which the greatest and wisest among the antients laid great stress. It is also every where in the Holy Scriptures inculcated; as I hope is well known to you; nor shall I now insist upon the illustration of it. But the use to be made of it is plainly this; if men through long negligence of God, through the prevalence of evil affections, or of bad habits which they have contracted, are likely, when they reflect seriously upon themselves, and



SERM. come to form resolutions of newness of  
 XII. life, to meet with pain and trouble in  
 the discipline of the heart, and in their labours to correct the obliquity of it; then the strong expressions we have in Scripture of the Divine countenance and aid, must be a very great encouragement to them, and engage them with cheerfulness in that discipline, by which such obliquity of the heart is corrected, and by which it is directed into the love of God. Our own endeavours are necessary, and they are commanded; and to represent the state of the mind as wholly impotent, and incapable of all endeavours, till it is, by an irresistible power applied, made capable of them, is a very great error; an error which has proved to many a very great snare. The Holy Scriptures have taught us another language; and have pressed it upon us, as our indispensable duty, to *work out our own salvation with fear and trembling*; at the same time encouraging us with the declaration, that *God worketh in his servants to will and to do of his good pleasure*. By this we are to hold fast, doing our own duty with sincerity and diligence, and humbly depending upon him  
 for

for success, *who fulfilleth in his servants* **SERM.**  
*the good pleasure of his goodness, and the* **XII.**  
*work of faith with power:*

Blessed are they  
who thus labour, and persevere in it!  
They will undoubtedly attain to that state  
of mind, in which the love of God is per-  
fected; and which will richly reward the  
pains they have taken in the internal dis-  
cipline of the heart, as being indeed the  
glory of nature, and from which the  
highest and most compleat enjoyment can  
never be separated: For so is the unchang-  
able will of God; and such is the unalter-  
able moral constitution we are under.

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## SERMON XIII.

The great importance of not being  
enslaved by any desire.

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I CORINTH. 6. 12.

*All things are lawful unto me, but all things  
are not expedient, all things are lawful for  
me, but I will not be brought under the  
power of any.*

SERM. **W**HEN we look into the constitu-  
XIII. tion of human nature, we find  
that our maker has endowed us with a  
very great variety of appetites and desires;  
and has provided objects of gratification  
suited to them; some, which are com-  
mon to us with the various orders of the  
brutal world; others again which are pe-  
culiar to us, and suited to our make as  
intel-

intelligent and moral agents. But when SERM.  
we look through the various desires which XIII.

are planted in us, and the enjoyments provided for us (with which it has pleased the Creator to enrich human life) we find a great difference among them, with respect to their value and importance in life. Some things, for instance, are absolutely necessary to the support of life; others are only desirable as conveniencies, and comforts in it; without which we might very well subsist, and even have a pleasing enjoyment of ourselves; for a very little will suffice the exigencies of nature, if we can be only contented.

Again, when we consider ourselves as intelligent and moral agents, and who are made for happiness far higher than that of mere animal nature, in which the brutal orders are partakers with us; it will be apparent, that what solely concerns animal life, being the lowest kind of our enjoyment, is not by any means, so much to be considered, or sought after, as that which gratifies the nobler affections of the mind; and promotes that excellent state of moral perfection, at which we are to aim



SERMON. aim as the highest thing we are capable  
 XIII. of attaining; and in which, in truth, we  
 have fellowship with the orders of being  
 above us. All this is obvious, and needs  
 not to be enlarged on.

But, then, as there is a difference  
 in our desires and affections, and the  
 various objects of them, with respect to  
 their importance in human life; and this  
 we are made capable of discerning, or, as  
 the Apostle speaks, of *approving things*  
*which are excellent*; so, we find nature en-  
 dowed with a power of regulating the  
 affections and desires, and, in consequence  
 of this, our pursuits; according to the  
 judgments, the cool and deliberate judg-  
 ments, which we form of the value and  
 importance of the things before us, and  
 which are the objects of our desire. We  
 are capable of restraining our desires upon  
 particular occasions; and denying our-  
 selves those gratifications to which they  
 urge us. Not only so, but by reasoning  
 with ourselves, and the various methods  
 of self discipline and government, we may  
 subdue the irregular force of particular  
 passions and desires; and encourage, and  
 strengthen others, which may have been

*being enslaved by any desire.*

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too weak and languid : of this every man, SERM.  
who has at all applied himself to the dis- XIII.  
cipline of the heart, must be sensible ;  
and this power which we have over our  
own desires and passions, is a most significant and considerable part of our frame ;  
for by this it is, that we are enabled to preserve that proportion of our powers,  
and appetites, to one another, in which the great beauty and perfection of human  
nature consists ; and which is also necessary to the happiness of it.

It is plain that some of our desires can never be too strong, that is, the desires of those great objects, which are desired for themselves only, and cannot be referred to any higher end ; such as that of virtue and moral perfection in ourselves, and the happiness of the Creation of God. Who ever found reason to complain that his love of virtue, and of perfection, was too strong ? Or who was ever self-condemned for the greatest imaginable goodwill and benevolence to others, provided it was properly directed ? In such affections, we are in no danger of exceeding ; which we manifestly are, in many of the subordinate affections, particularly to the things

SERM. things of this world, whether sensual pleasure, or those things which gratify ambition, or the desire of riches. For it is often seen that some one desire, to some or other of these objects, reigns through the whole life, does miserably enslave men, keeping the mind constantly out of order, and in a distempered state; nor, in truth, is there any thing to be more guarded against, than such intemperance and excess of desire.

It was a noble resolution of the Apostle Paul, *that he would not be brought under the power of any thing*; any thing, of that kind by which weak and corrupted minds are enslaved; any thing, by which he might be led to what was sinful; or, though not directly unlawful, yet unexpedient. *All things, saith he, are lawful to me; but all things are not expedient*: An expression which he often uses, with respect to his liberty as a christian. All things are lawful for me, which are lawful for any other person; but all things are not expedient, or profitable; that is, to the purposes of edification, which he had always principally in view. And therefore he would abridge his liberty, and  
restrain

*being enslaved by any desire.*

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restrain his desires, even as to things law-<sup>SERM.</sup>  
ful ; whenever his gratifying them, would <sup>XIII.</sup>

*be injurious to a nobler interest. All things  
are lawful for me, but I will not be brought  
under the power, or made a slave to any  
thing.* I will, as if he had said, so moderate and restrain my desires, even in things lawful, as that if they are not necessary, I shall be able to rest contented, and to enjoy myself without them : I will keep my mind, by self discipline, in such a state that I may call myself free, morally free ; a thing surely much more desirable than any pleasure which a man, in an undisciplined state, can enjoy from any object, or in the gratification of any desire whatsoever, by which he is enslaved.

More needs not be said to explain the true meaning of the Apostles resolution. I shall therefore proceed to illustrate the wisdom and dignity of it ; and its exceeding usefulness in human life.

And in the first place, every man who has any taste in matters of morality, and can *approve the things which are excellent*, must be sensible, that in such a state of freedom and independency, there is something truly honourable and great. For  
a man



SERMON. man to be so much master of himself, and  
 XIII. his own desires, that though he can re-  
 lish the various pleasures and comforts of  
 life, which by the bountiful Creator are  
 liberally conferred on us, however, per-  
 haps, not at all necessary, either to the  
 subsistence of life, or to answer the true  
 ends of it; though I say, he can relish  
 these pleasures as well as any other man,  
 yet, he can also be satisfied without them.  
 No man can calmly survey such a character  
 without approbation and esteem. And such  
 only are the persons who maintain inward  
 freedom. For a man to be so under the  
 power of any passion that he can have no  
 enjoyment but in the gratification of it;  
 (I speak now of passions of the subordi-  
 nate kind and which are the proper sub-  
 jects of virtuous discipline) to be so under  
 the power of it, that he will gratify pas-  
 sion at any expence to himself, or to  
 others; to be so dragged by it, to use the  
 expression of Solomon, *as an ox to the  
 slaughter, or a fool to the correction of the  
 stocks*; this is an indignity to human na-  
 ture, and makes a most contemptible cha-  
 racter. *He that has no rule over his own  
 spirit*, as the wise man but now men-  
 tioned

*being enslaved by any desire.*

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tioned speaks, *is like a City broken down and* S E R M.  
*without walls*; he is not only in a state XIII.  
defenceless and dangerous; but, which is  
all disagreeable ruin and confusion. The  
beauty and excellency of human nature  
is lost in such a man; the great and ho-  
nourable are no more. No slavery so  
compleat, so hateful as this; or which  
gives a man a meaner appearance. The  
excellent powers and faculties of the mind,  
the noble and generous affections origi-  
nally planted in the heart, all subjected  
to one paltry lust or passion, and, which  
is generally the case, rendered useless by  
it! And it is usually seen, that such pas-  
sions betray men into the meanest and  
most unworthy actions; their honour,  
perhaps in the tenderest points, sacrificed  
to this idol passion, their friends, their  
country, the public! Nay, though men  
have a sense of what is due to all these,  
and know what they ought to do, and  
condemn themselves, possibly too feel bit-  
ter remorse; yet they lose all power to  
resist the imperious tyrant which reigns  
within; and, upon the ruins of every thing  
liberal and ingenuous, his arbitrary rule  
must be maintained. No liberal mind but  
must

SER M. must look upon such characters with contempt ! In what a different light does that man appear, who is really free within ? In whom the inferior and subordinate passions are subjected to reason and conscience ; to those nobler desires and affections, which are intended to be supreme in the mind ! The man who knows how to do justice to himself, the man whose honour, whose friend, whose country, never lay at the mercy of any lust of his ; never suffered by his ambition, his covetousness, or his passion for pleasure ! Not only so, but who has raised himself to such a state, that when he is deprived of the things which he desires, and of which perhaps he has a high relish ; can still be easy and happy without them ! The man, who is constant and true to himself, who is what he ought to be, to himself, and to the public ; though cut off from a thousand things which were pleasing ; who can enjoy them, and can refrain from them ; still, in all events, the same man ! This is truly most honourable. And sure, in such dignity of sentiment, in such a state of mind, there is nothing at all romantic, or out of nature ; for it has its  
foun-

*being enslaved by any desire.*

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dation in reason and nature; it is perfect-S E R M.  
ly agreeable to good sense and wisdom. XIII.

This will appear evidently, if we consider that a man has just cause to be easy and satisfied, when those great ends of life are answered, and those enjoyments in it preserved, which are incomparably the noblest; and have no connection with, or dependence upon, the lower and unnecessary gratifications. The former are what make us happy as rational and moral agents; and he who is possessed of them, will almost always find reason to say, it is enough. Can I serve all the important purposes of my present state, may such a man say; can I relish the highest delight and satisfaction intended for me, without this or the other particular gratification, which, though not necessary, yet was pleasing? If so, surely I have reason, great reason, to be content without it. And surely, it must be a wretched turn of mind, quite out of nature, and very mean, which so subjects one to any particular desire, or object; that he can have no enjoyment of himself, even in the greatest and manifold endowments and advantages of human nature, without being

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pleased



• SERM. pleased and gratified in that one point.

XIII. And thus, if there were no more than

the truly excellent and honourable, which we cannot but discern in a state of inward freedom, and the abject meanness we feel in a state of servitude to our own lower desires; these are more than enough to determine us in the firmest resolution, that we will not be brought under the power of any such things; under the power of any animal desire or enjoyment, of which the true ends of life are independent; nay, of the love of life itself; which, though one of the strongest affections of our nature, yet was intended to be subordinate to those others, which alone give it true dignity and value.

Let it be considered, in the second place, that this freedom and independency of mind, is necessary as a security to virtue. You see this discourse is not confined to those things which the apostle speaks of in the text; namely things which are in themselves lawful but yet inexpedient; but considers a state of servitude to particular passions, and a state of moral freedom, in general, whether the object of the reigning desire be a thing lawful or not.

If

*being enslaved by any desire.*

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If indeed the desire points to what is un-<sup>SERM.</sup>lawful, the case is so much the worse: **XIII.**

For then, if no controlling power is exerted, virtue and conscience must go intirely to wreck; which we daily see is the case, in many characters. And no man can ever be true to his conscience, till he has learned to deny himself, and restrain desire. Where there is an utter absence of this discipline, and men are at the mercy of every desire, which happens to be uppermost, the state is indeed deplorable: Men are then prepared to fall into all vices, to which, from complexion, circumstances, example or sollicitation, they are at all tempted. In some instances, indeed, perhaps they are not a few, we see persons of most amiable characters, and dispositions, in all other respects, yet ruined by some one vice, some one tyrannical passion; so that the beauty of the character is, in a great measure lost, and great guilt contracted. Such persons, perhaps, can maintain the rights of conscience in all other respects, but in one instance it must give way. They want but one thing to make their characters perfect, that is, intire and uniform; but this they never at-

A a 2

tain

SERM. tain to; and as Solomon speaks, *a little  
XIII. folly in him who is in reputation for wisdom  
and honour, has the same effect as a dead  
fly upon the ointment of the apothecary, causing  
it to send forth a stinking savour.* And cer-  
tainly, to lose the honours, the substan-  
tial and eternal honours and rewards of  
virtue, and to expose ones self to shame  
and ignominy, and great wretchedness, ra-  
ther than restrain, and subdue, perhaps,  
one irregular lust, is in truth, a most un-  
happy and pitiable case.

But let us speak more particularly to  
the case put in the text, to a man's being  
enslaved, by a passion, to an object not  
unlawful; in how many respects does this  
endanger virtue. There is nothing more  
frequently inculcated in the New Testa-  
ment, or in stronger terms, than self-de-  
nial. And our Saviour proposes it to such  
as would embrace his religion, as a necessa-  
ry preliminary, that they should deny  
themselves, and be ready to part even with  
the most innocent enjoyments of life, nay,  
with life itself, when he calls them to do  
so, and his service requires it. Now, put  
the case, that the service of Christ, the  
cause of truth and virtue should require,  
that

that we give up what we have been **SERM.**  
most passionately fond of; how distressful **XIII.**

a state must any person be then in, who has no power to restrain his passion? It is evident he will give up his pretensions to the christian character; for, if he has given up the power of subduing his desires, his conscience must suffer; he must become disloyal to his great sovereign, and a traitor to his cause. And are such trials confined to times of persecution only? No such thing. God may in the general course of providence, take from men what has been the desire of their eyes; they are called upon to submit to this; it is their indispensable duty. Yet, how can they perform, if the reluctant passion will bear no restraint? This shews the necessity of self-discipline and denial, that we may approve ourselves to God. And if there be any thing in the world of greater consideration with us, than our love and loyalty to him, we cannot be accepted as his faithful servants. But besides, let it be supposed that our integrity and loyalty to our Maker should never be put to a trial so severe; that we should never know the painful conflict between conscience and



SERM. passion to any particular favourite object

XIII. of the temporal kind, which our duty commands us absolutely to give up; yet a passion of this sort, when grown vehement and irregular, may so much engage the mind, as to render men unfit for the performance of duty, and negligent of it. An habitual excessive attachment to any one thing, does naturally beget an indifference towards other things; and the attention of the mind to this is so great, that other matters are probably but little noticed; even those which are of the greatest moment. The mind is enslaved, the powers are confined and shackled; men can no longer act with liberty, or in that manner that becomes those who are supposed to follow a cool deliberate judgment; and to regard things in proportion to their real value. But all this will convincingly appear, it will be felt, when the present gratification of the reigning passion, and the immediate call of duty, come to interfere; so that, either we must neglect the part we are to act; or must restrain the desire which would divert us from it; in that case, the person *who has been brought under the power of any thing*, will be in great

great danger of giving way to the de-  
mands of it, and of resisting the call of  
conscience; so that an enjoyment in it-  
self innocent, through excess of passion for  
it, may become the cause of great guilt.  
So, for instance, diversions in themselves  
very innocent, may inroach upon the  
time which ought to be bestowed upon  
things of much greater moment; and  
quite indispose the mind for them; in  
which case, such amusements cease to be  
innocent. A man likewise may be so ea-  
ger in the pursuit of what he may very  
lawfully pursue with moderation, that the  
gratifying this vehement desire may ren-  
der him not only unfit for, but incapable  
of performing his duty to his Maker, at  
least of performing it in that manner which  
will answer any good end, and be accepted.  
For, what avail any seeming acts and ex-  
ercises of devotion, where the thoughts  
are possessed by objects quite foreign to  
the purpose; where imagination is enter-  
taining itself with the object to which the  
heart is enslaved, while yet the man, so far  
as external form and appearance go, and  
words uttered by the lips, seems to wor-  
ship his Maker? But as there is in this

SERMON. case no more indeed than an external appearance of devotion; he incurs the guilt of gross hypocrisy.

XIII.

Farther, *being brought under the power of any thing*, in the Apostle's sense, however in itself lawful, may be very unfriendly to virtue upon this account, that if men cannot obtain the gratification upon which their hearts are set, in the methods of honesty and truth, they will be very apt to deviate into dishonest ways, and thus violate conscience rather than forego the desired object. When a man's mind is in such a distemper'd state that he must have this or the other thing; that is, when the strength of desire has made it seem necessary to him; and yet he cannot obtain it but in ways which his heart condemns, he is then in the greatest danger. Thus, a passion for outward shew and pomp; a passion for rank and pre-eminence; for gain; and for gratifying a luxurious and delicate appetite; these, and such like, have often betrayed men into dishonourable ways and means of gratification: Their virtue thus put to the proof, has failed; tho' nothing here gave force to the trial, but the mere exorbitance of their own passion, creating

*being enslaved by any desire.*

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creating a sort of necessity where there S E R M.  
was none in nature. I speak not now of XIII.

men who have little or no regard to the rules of righteousness; and make light of committing very great crimes; but of such as have very just sentiments and feelings of morality, and in their hearts, condemn all transgressions of its rules; who yet, urged by vehemence of passion, break in upon them, and the tranquillity of their own minds. It has been often and justly observed, that to have few wants is one of the first requisites for passing easily through life: It is indeed one of the best out-guards of virtue; few and simple wants are attended with proportionably few temptations; and keeping within the modesty of nature's demands, will prevent occasions of transgressing its dictates. This deserves very seriously to be considered; for in truth, a great many, perhaps, the far greater part of our wants, are the mere creatures of our own passion; and things are made necessary to us only in consequence of indulged desire. If we did but suppress such desire, we should have the full enjoyment of life without it: or if we only restrain'd its excess, we should then  
possess



**S****E****R****M.** possess our souls in peace, even without its  
**XIII.** object. Only when desire becomes vehement, does the object of it become necessary; which, if we cannot attain by honest means, recourse must be had to others, or much disquiet will arise from disappointment. Dissatisfaction and discontent with our state, and the disposition of things in the world, will take possession of the mind; which as they are very painful passions, so are they unnatural and guilty. And thus you see, that passionate desires to any thing in this world, however in a moderate degree not blameable, nor the object of them a thing unlawful; yet they may greatly endanger our virtue, and prove a most fatal snare to us.

But in the third place, (to which what has been already said, leads us,) *to be thus brought under the power of any thing*, lays us open to much calamity and suffering; from which a person, who maintains a proper independency of spirit, is sure of being free. So many different things as a man has set his heart upon, while they are of a transient, precarious nature, so many marks he sets up for misfortune and disappointment to wound him through.

So

*being enslaved by any desire.*

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So many things as he cannot enjoy him-**SERM.**  
self without, so many sources of vexation **XIII.**

and misery does he provide for himself.

He is now very happy in this or the other  
fleeting thing, which is become necessary  
to him: But (like Jonah's gourd) it is  
gone, and he is inconsolable; now all this  
vexation of spirit is the fruit of eager de-  
fire, and passionate fondness; but for these,  
he could never have felt any such pain.

When therefore he is disappointed, or de-  
prived of it, he must either attain to peace  
of mind, and self enjoyment, by subdu-  
ing his passion, or must live a wretch:  
And sure a wretched state it is, where the  
eagerness of desire still continues, and gra-  
tification is out of reach; a state, in which  
the mind becomes its own tormentor!

But beside the precariousness of posses-  
sion, in all instances where things tempo-  
ral are the objects of desire; how many the  
hard and severe labours upon which im-  
moderate desires often put men, in pursu-  
ing what they want? There is, saith the  
wise man, *whose days are sorrow, and his  
travel grief; yea his heart taketh not rest in  
the night.* Such are the men who are con-  
stantly full of care and anxiety, of rest-  
less,

**SERM.** less, unsatisfying labour; ever put upon  
**XIII.** such undertakings and adventures, such  
 courses of toil and danger, as the acquisition of no temporal good can compensate. No man ever served a master more severe and cruel than his own headstrong passions; he can never do enough in the service of them; for no gratification of irregular desires can ever give content. Have we not seen many slaves to these cruel task-masters, whose anxieties and labours have quite embittered life? Who, whatever accidental success they had in their attempts, yet found little or no enjoyment; passion often quite defeating its own end, and leaving no power of enjoyment: And, what is still worse, how many disappointments do men lay themselves open to? How often do their attempts fail of success? Their schemes laid with the deepest contrivance, how often defeated? How do such things pierce the heart of a man, who has brought himself into the power of uncontrolled appetite? What crosses his aims, and defeats his hopes and endeavours, strikes at the very vitals of his comfort; and are like wounds that bleed inwardly, and do not admit of cure.

*being enslaved by any desire.*

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cure. But, suppose all imaginable success, and that men have got what their hearts are set upon, still they often suffer deeply, by solicitude, and the apprehension of losing what they have acquired; every threatening circumstance puts them to pain; and there is often more pain in the care to keep, than enjoyment in the possession. Now, all these pains and calamities I have mentioned, and many more might be named, are in reality the offspring of fond and deluded desire; and but from that could have no existence; which evidently shews, that to be under the power of such desire, is indeed the bane of man's peace and enjoyment, instead of making him happy.

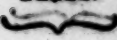
If we lay these things together, and at the same time consider a servitude to our own passions, as mean and reproachful to nature; as a thing most hurtful to our virtue, and as the source of manifold calamities, which we should never otherwise have known; it will then be most evident, that the Apostle's resolution was manly and wise; *that he would not be brought under the power of any thing.*

And

S E R M.

XIII.



SER M. And this will be still farther confirmed,  
 XIII.  to men who have tried it, by the experience of that substantial and sincere pleasure which arises from virtuous self-denial. When a man has, in a particular instance, restrained desire, and refused to gratify it; when he has done this from principle merely, and a sense of its being expedient; with what joy does he reflect upon it! especially when the desire has been passionately strong; and in some instances, of more weight and importance in life, there is perhaps no self enjoyment to be compared to this. A man's own heart applauds him, as having acted a part becoming the dignity of his nature, and which is truly honourable. No joy, equal to this, did any man ever taste in gratifying the impetuous longings of desire. And in truth it may be justly represented as one advantage of our present frame, that by demanding from us the exercise of such discipline, it gives us an opportunity of enjoying so much real and lasting happiness: a happiness, far unlike the pleasure of gratifying irregular desire; which is momentary, and palls the languid appetite: Whereas this virtuous pleasure,

is

*being enslaved by any desire.*

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is of a permanent nature, without satiety; **SERM.**  
and we never reflect upon having acted **XIII.**

such a laudable part, but with fresh self-  
approbation. Which satisfaction is car-

ried to the highest, and enjoyed in the  
most exquisite relishes of it, when men

are conscious to themselves, not only, that  
they have, in particular instances, denied

themselves, and resisted irregular desires;  
but that by an habitual exercise of this

sort of discipline, they have subdued their  
irregular passions, and reduced them into

such a well-adjusted temper, that they  
cease to give them any farther trouble.

When the strength of desire comes to be  
duly proportioned, nothing then remains

but what the dignity and importance of  
the object warrant, and right reason ap-

proves. When, thus, a pleasing and beauti-  
ful calm obtains in the mind, which, like

the appeased ocean, flows regularly and  
gently to its proper limits; then, then indeed

is the state of mind such as does honour to  
human nature; and in which a man will

find that peace and satisfaction, which  
passeth all understanding; And a glorious

discipline it surely is, which produceth such  
effects!

But

SERM. But that we may now draw to a conclusion of this discourse; I have described **XIII.** to you such a servitude to desire and passion, as may well be considered as the root of all evil; for men will never depart from the rules of wisdom and goodness, never act in opposition to the manifest dictates of conscience, if they are not under the power of some corrupt and irregular affection. And you see likewise, wherein the great security of our virtue, and the peace of our minds consists, namely, in being masters of ourselves; maintaining a freedom from all servitude to passion. While this is our happiness, what shall hinder us to go on as cool reason and conscience direct, in pursuing the tendency of the nobler principles and instincts of our nature? At the same time, the inferior appetites and desires, kept in proper order and subordination, will give us little or no disturbance.

To this noble self-discipline, therefore, which is of so great importance in human life, let us apply ourselves with all diligence. Let us give way to no passion, however clamorous, till we have examined it at the bar of reason and conscience;

if

if these approve, and no other inexpedi-  
ency appear, let it be gratified: But if

S E R M.  
XIII.

they forbid, or even hesitate and are doubtful, let the passion be renounced; otherwise we do not at all *quit us like men.*

And it is highly expedient that we should use such self discipline, not only where our consciences are nearly concerned, and in matters of right and wrong; but, even with respect to things, lawful in themselves; for it may be very inconvenient, many times, to let passion have full way, even in these. Besides, it may be highly profitable to exercise and accustom ourselves to self-denial, in matters of less moment, that we may be prepared for it, in those of greater. Numberless instances occur, in which an attentive and considering person will see reason to deny himself; where notwithstanding, the present object of desire cannot be called unlawful, or of any great importance. And it will be found greatly profitable to keep the controlling power, by frequent exercise, in proper strength; and by habit, to acquire a facility of submitting our passions to it. It is a wise and useful part of the discipline of children to accustom them to the



SERM. restraint of their many fond and hurtful  
**XIII.** desires and passions: to refuse gratifying  
 them, in many instances, merely by such  
 refusal, to prepare them easily to brook re-  
 straint. And where this is managed, with  
 prudence, it is of unspeakable advantage.  
 Now it is to be considered, that there may  
 be much of the child in our desires and  
 passions, all our days; that is much fond-  
 ness and folly; and as such they must be  
 kept always under control. In this let  
 us exercise ourselves, that we *may not be*  
*brought under the power of any*; and may  
 be always fitted to possess our souls in  
 peace and tranquillity, so long as the great  
 purposes of life are served, and the nobler  
 affections of our nature gratified.

SERMON

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# SERMON XIV.

Our absolute dependence on God.

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ACTS, 17. 28.

*For in Him we live, and move, and have  
our being.*

THE principles of natural and re-  
vealed religion, upon which we  
are to form our conduct, and upon which  
our hopes rely, are plain, and easily learned  
by all who, with common understanding,  
will give reasonable attention. And that  
these are chiefly the subject of public in-  
struction, the seasons of which frequently  
return, is not so to be understood, as if  
it were a laborious thing to obtain a suf-

SERM.  
XIV.

SERM. ficient knowledge in religion; or as if men  
 XIV. were to expect, from time to time, any  
 thing new; whereas indeed the greatest  
 use of these ministrations is to keep up in  
 the mind lively impressions of religion, in  
 those who have already received them;  
 and to make such impressions upon others;  
 as that the heart and life may be made  
 better; and the great end of all religion,  
 the salvation of our souls, may be answer-  
 ed. And besides this, it must, to persons  
 of a right taste, be pleasing, from time to  
 time, to entertain themselves with medi-  
 tations, upon those subjects, which of all  
 things are the greatest and most interest-  
 ing; and in which we meet with what  
 tends to excite our best and most agreea-  
 ble affections. My intention is, at pre-  
 sent, to discourse concerning our depen-  
 dence upon the Deity, our constant im-  
 mediate dependence, for life and all the  
 powers and enjoyments of it; a subject  
 upon which many useful reflections may  
 be made.

The apostle Paul in the text, teaches us  
 that *in him we live, and move, and have our  
 being.* To give you a full and just view of  
 this, I shall particularly consider the hu-  
 man

man frame; and shew that from the lowest S E R M.  
to the highest of our powers and enjoy- XIV.  
ments, and in the whole of our constitution and make, we are absolutely dependent upon the power and goodness of God continually exercised towards us.

We are taught in Scripture, and it is the language too of the best philosophy, that our bodies are the workmanship of God. This is set forth in a very elegant manner in the 139 Psalm. *I will praise thee for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well: My substance was not hid from thee when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lower parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.* But here we may carry our speculations farther. For not only the form, but the very matter of which our bodies, and all other material structures, are framed, could have no subsistence but in God, in the constant energy of his power. We may see that all matter consists of innumerable parts joined and adhering together. It has



SE R M. been thought demonstrable, that in dividing these parts, there can be no end, nor any particle of matter so small, but that it is still divisible. However, without entering into that argument, we see evidently, that all that we call matter or body, is extended and solid, and consists of innumerable parts. Now by what bond are these parts, evidently separable, held together? This is the question. To say that they attract one another, and that this is an essential quality of matter, is saying just nothing. For whence this attraction? Whence this quality, which we see is amazingly different in degree of power, in different parts of matter? Here we are forced to call in a foreign power and agency; the agency of the original creating mind, without the constant exertion of which there could be no union or cohesion of the parts; and consequently no material object at all. This is necessary to the subsistence of the least grain of sand, the least apparent atom. And without this constant operation of mind, all matter must visibly cease to be.

After this is once received by the mind as a just account, no one will hesitate in ascribing

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ascribing to the energy of the first cause, SERM.  
XIV.  
those qualities and powers of the fibres and fluids of which the human body is composed, that are necessary to such an animated frame, and which are wonderfully adapted to the purposes of it. By the power of the first cause the vital motion first began; and by that it is continued, according to certain laws of nature, as they are called; but which, in truth, are no other than the rules and measures by which the original energy and activity is exerted. For many ages men were accustomed to speak of certain laws of matter, as that whereby the state and various modifications of it were determined, without any immediate energy of the supreme cause. They spoke of the spontaneous generation of many animals, from a supposed vital heat diffused by the sun through nature. But the knowledge which the curious and attentive have acquired of nature, by repeated experiments, (and surely that is the only way of attaining such knowledge) shews, that there are no such material energies, but that all is the workmanship of an intelligent cause, by whom all the bodies of animals, even of

SERM. the meanest insects, are framed and quick-  
 XIV. ned; by whom also the individuals of every  
 species are made so like to one another in all  
 their parts, and every species from age to age  
 preserved. Many are the curious observations  
 which the best naturalists have made to  
 illustrate this; but perhaps it would not be  
 proper to take up your time, in this place, with  
 an account of them. Let us therefore pass  
 from the external frame, and vital motion,  
 to other and higher things, which are just  
 as unaccountable, without introducing the  
 energy of the supreme mind; or which is  
 the same thing to us, of intelligent causes,  
 acting by a power derived from him. One  
 of the most obvious things that concern  
 us, is a certain power or capacity, by which  
 we receive the impressions of external ob-  
 jects. These we get by means of our  
 senses, such as, sight, hearing, smell,  
 taste, &c. Every one knows that he does  
 by means of these senses get a perception  
 of light and colours, of sounds, of the  
 figure of body, and such like sensible qua-  
 lities. And every man is convinced, that  
 if the particular sense through which a  
 simple idea is introduc'd, were wanting, he  
 could never have that idea; no description  
 from

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from others would give it him. The man SERM.  
who is born blind can never be made to XIV.

perceive what light is; and the man who  
is born deaf can as little apprehend what  
is sound. But, tho' we know we get these  
perceptions by means of our senses, yet who  
can shew any connection between the or-  
gan and the sensation of the mind? For ex-  
ample, between the eye and the perception  
of colours; between the ear and the percep-  
tion of sounds? We are used to speak of hear-  
ing with the ear, and of seeing with the eye,  
as the most familiar of all things; and we  
know that if the organ of sense be in a  
natural and healthful state, we have those  
sensations, and think there is no difficulty  
in it. Yet upon a more close inquiry we  
shall find, as above, that no philosophy can  
make out any connection at all between  
the presence of an object, or its affecting  
the external organ, and that perception  
which is raised in our minds. It is not the  
eye, but the mind which sees; it is not  
the ear, but the mind which hears. And  
the raising of these ideas or perceptions,  
is the effect of a cause quite different from  
matter. In a word, here we want, and  
cannot rationally solve the difficulty by  
any thing else, but the creator's power.

Without



SERM. Without this we could receive no ideas of  
 XIV. objects at all.

But as we have this power of receiving ideas from him, (rather it is his power by which they are raised in the mind) so there is a faculty in us of retaining the ideas of things once got, which faculty we call memory. And how amazingly does this precious endowment contribute to our happiness! What an irreparable loss would we feel in human life without it! but who can give any account of the cause of it? We find that what is laid up in our memory does sometimes present itself to the thoughts spontaneously, and without any design or effort of ours. At other times, we are sensible of endeavouring to call up to our remembrance the things which are past, and we can often do it, by the power of recollection. In some men memory is tenacious and faithful; in other, less so. But we see almost all men are endowed with it in such a degree as is necessary to serve the purposes of human life. Now, can any thing that we know of the properties of matter account for this? Or any property which is discernable in any of the parts of the human

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man body? Or can we say that we have SERM.  
given to ourselves this power of treasur- XIV.  
ing up our ideas, and calling them up to  
our notice, and attention, as we think fit?

No. Another cause must be sought after.

It is no doubt by the same power from  
which we first receive our ideas, that we  
are enabled to remember them; by the  
power of our Creator acting upon us.

That one man cannot remember as well as  
another, and that in old age, with the  
powers of the body, the memory is seen to  
decay; is no just exception to this. For

it only shews that there are certain rules  
and measures, certain means by which the  
power of the Supreme Being acts, although  
he could, no doubt, act without them.

Should it be, for example, by the power  
of God immediately acting, that we re-  
ceive the idea of light through the eye;

yet the persons who are born blind never  
receive that perception: Which shews  
that it is a law of nature, or one of the  
rules of the Divine administration, that

by means of an organ, the eye, we shall  
receive it, and no otherwise. Just so,  
there may be a frame and state of the  
body which is the means of our remem-  
bring;

SERM. bring; and which may in some be more

XIV. happily adapted to that purpose, than in others; and more so in one part of life, than in another; yet still there is no rational account to be given of the thing itself, but by a power acting upon us, without the continual operation of which the sensitive power could not avail.

To proceed to the powers of judging and reasoning; we are taught in the book of Job that *the inspiration of the Almighty gives men understanding*: As it is from this they receive their original ideas, so is it by this Divine influence they are enabled to reason; to judge of things when compared together; and to deduce from certain and received principles, a great variety of conclusions by which our knowledge is increased. We likewise see this admirable and useful faculty given to men, in a great variety of degrees. The sagacity, penetration, and discernment of some men, surprizes all around them. Others far inferior to them, and in great danger of falling into error and mistake, betray upon many occasions much weakness and folly. And although a careful culture of the mind, and a patient attention to the ob-

jects

jects of thought, will go a great way to **SERM.**  
improve the judgment, and lead men into **XIV.**

the paths of truth; yet no possible culture will make the understanding and capacity of some equal to that of others. Here God has made a difference, which by no means in our power can be taken away. He gives the clear perception, and the strong judgment: All that variety we see in the natural powers, is from him, who giveth *to every man severally as he will*. He gives, he continues these powers; and when he pleases, he can withdraw them, which is often seen to be the case; inso-much that men who have been celebrated for wisdom, have sunk into a state of most compassionate and childish weakness. Such is our present state, and such our dependence upon the providence of God, that tho' the intellectual powers should not go to ruin by means of the natural decay of the bodily frame; yet they are liable to hurt, by many accidents, many disorders, by which men may be sunk into stupidity or raised to phrenzy; thus rendered, in either case, utterly incapable of the functions of rational life.

But



SERM. But the most important part of our

**XIV.** frame is still behind, that is, our moral powers and senses. By these we become capable of knowing and loving what is true, and pure, and just, and honourable; hence spring our perceptions of the great, and good, and lovely, in characters and actions; and we are raised by them to a most exalted station, as bearing indeed the image of our Maker. To this part of our frame we owe it, that the main sources of our happiness lie within us, and are independent of external events. He who made the hearing or the deaf, the seeing or the blind; he who gives or withholds the ideas and perceptions of external objects, does also give us these moral perceptions, which are of such mighty importance. Quite different from mere ideas of the outward object, which might be without any such moral feelings of the mind, they are an order of sensations perfectly distinct, and the immediate work of God. If he had not planted them originally in our natures, no discipline or culture could have given them. But as we are framed with a sense of the great and beautiful, of the proportioned and harmonious,

harmonious, in external objects, or the SERM.  
contrary; and are endowed with a taste XIV.  
to which these appear lovely and agreea-  
ble, or deformed and displeasing, (from  
which a great fund of delight arises to us  
in the contemplation of nature) so also  
hath the Creator made us with a much  
more interesting sense of dignity and beau-  
ty, or of deformity and meanness, in  
characters and actions. Why should a dis-  
tressed object raise pity in us? Why  
should our pursuing the tendency of this  
affection, in generously relieving the dis-  
tressed, give a pleasing sensation even in  
our reflecting upon it? Why should one  
character appear amiable and pleasing in  
contemplating it, and another raise horror  
and aversion in the mind? The plain an-  
swer is that we are framed with powers  
and senses which necessarily render it so.  
Just as light is made sweet, and as it is a  
pleasing thing to behold the sun. And  
there can be no reason to doubt but that,  
in the feelings of these internal senses, the  
Divine power is to be recognised, as in  
the perceptions given us of external ob-  
jects, by means of the bodily organs. But  
before we quit this view of the powers and  
affections

SERM. affections of the mind, there is one observation applicable to all of them, which is of great use in convincing us of our dependence upon an agency, not our own, for our operations; and it is what the experience of every man who is attentive to his own state, must present to him; namely, that upon some occasions, the sensations of the mind shall be very lively, the apprehension quick and clear, the reasoning powers shall act with ease, and the exercise of the best affections be vigorous, and most pleasing. At other times, every thing shall be the reverse of this; all the sensations and affections languid, the rational powers in a kind of stupor, and the whole mind quite out of tune, disagreeable to, and displeased with itself: And at such times, no endeavours of our own are successful to make it otherwise. This is often known to be the case, when the cause is quite out of sight: Nothing observable in the state of the health having happened, nor any extraordinary event to which it may be ascribed. Yet surely the difference between the manner of acting of the same person, on these different occasions, and the state of mind, is as great as might

might be expected, in quite different or SERM.  
opposite characters: And there is scarce XIV.

any thing we can be more sensible of than this, that this matter is not owing to any choice or acting of ours; but to a cause which is not at all in our own power. Perhaps it is really owing to different turns in the state of the body; we cannot say the contrary; because we do not know what effects the state of the body may have upon that of the mind; but this at least, we are sure of, that whatever foreign cause it is owing to, that cause is still under the influence and direction of the Supreme mind, in whose hand our breath is, and whose are all our ways. However, from hence we may learn that we are dependent upon God, not only for our original powers, which are his workmanship, but for the free exercise of them.

And this will still appear in a more affecting light, when we consider to how many disorders, in the state of the body, we are liable; whereby the organs of sensation and action are so hurt and impaired, that the use of the thinking powers is in a great measure, nay sometimes wholly lost by them. But this has been already



SERMON. mentioned, and is so obvious, that there  
 XIV. can be no occasion for insisting farther up-  
 on it.

Let us now come to our voluntary external actions. And here we see what is as mysterious and unaccountable, without the agency of the original acting power, as any thing yet named. We seem perfectly sensible that by an act of our wills, we can move our bodies and limbs. And if they are not in an unhealthful state, we find that the power of our minds over them, to a certain degree, never fails. But now let any man set himself down to think, what connection he can find between a thought, a volition of his mind, and the motion of his material frame! How such a volition should move a hand or a foot! Anatomists have very exactly described all perhaps that is to be known of the form of the parts, of the nerves and muscles, and that state of them upon which voluntary motion depends. But then, as to the main point, how the nerves, and by the means of them, the muscles, are moved by a thought of the mind, they are utterly ignorant. As it is impossible for us to perceive any connection, between  
 the

the affecting of the bodily organs by an S E R M. external object, and raising a perception XIV.

or idea in the mind; so likewise, it is impossible to explain how the thoughts of the mind should produce motion in the body. Here again, we must have recourse to the original power; without whom we can do nothing. And indeed, the soundest philosophy teaches us to rest here, that as the great original power has established a connection between the acts of our will, and our bodily voluntary motions; so by a present and constant energy derived from that power, this connection is maintained. No other satisfactory account is to be given of the matter. And surely it is very surprizing to think of the power which the affections, and passions of the mind, have upon the bodily frame. Some of them, particularly joy and grief, shall rise upon some occasions to such a degree, as to destroy it intirely; and of this there have been many instances. How astonishing the union between mind and matter, between mere thought and body! We may justly say with the Psalmist, *that we are fearfully and wonderfully-made!*

I shall conclude this illustration with a

SERM. few remarks upon pleasure and pain ;  
 XIV. which may contribute to cast still farther  
 light upon the subject.

Pleasure is intirely the gift of God to us ; we could not create it, more than we could make ourselves. There is a pleasing enjoyment of animal life, and health, which is of great consideration in our state. When the health is sound, and there is an easy and clear flow of animal spirits, existence is delightful to us. When we say we are well, we so far intimate that we have pleasure in being ; and it is great and various pleasure, which makes the apprehensions of being otherwise, or of ceasing to be, so very painful to us. Our Creator is undoubtedly the author of this delight : He has given, and he maintains the sensations ; He too has contrived, and upholds that state of things, and that combination of parts and powers, from which enjoyment arises.

But when we proceed to contemplate the various pleasures for which we are formed, in the fruition of external objects, or the powers and affections of our own minds, we see they are in a manner innumerable. How great the number of  
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sensual gratifications! of the pleasures SERM.  
of sight, of hearing, of the taste, &c.!

XIV.

how admirably varied, every day, in every circumstance inviting us to adore the goodness of the Creator! Again, how manifold the pleasures of the imagination, that wonderful faculty, which can add to the real, additional scenes of entertainment of its own creating! How manifold those delights which are more pure and intellectual, in contemplating the world of spirits, especially that most glorious Being, the author of all! From the knowledge of his existence, and high perfections; from the relations in which we stand to him, from a sense of his favour and approbation, and the promised happy fruits of it, how unspeakable the delight! who that has not felt, can imagine the joy which springs from the light of his countenance? To make men capable of this, and of a just confidence in God, there must be a right state of the heart and affections. But this again, in itself, yields pure and noble delight to the reflecting mind. All the joys which our senses know, are not worthy to be compared with that which results from a consciof-



SERM. ness of good affections, and of good actions performed upon right principles. To  
 XIV. all this may be added, the delight which men have in the improvement of their minds in knowledge, wherein progress may be made that knows no end.

Now, none of the external objects of our delight are properly of our own making: They are provided for us by the bountiful author of our nature; and are, in many respects, quite independent of us. So are also the powers by which we have a perception of pleasure in them; nay so is every particular sensation of pleasure; for we might be cut immediately off from all enjoyment by the suspension of that energy, but for a moment, upon which even our whole being rests. But what I would have particularly observed here is, that we find in various persons a remarkable variety in the degree of pleasure which, by means of the same powers and affections, they have in the same objects. In other words, some have a much greater sensibility and delicacy of taste than others. Now what is this to be ascribed to? We very well know that the effect of it is very considerable in human life

life; in as much as one person, in the same circumstances, and conversing with the same objects, shall have much more delight than another. In vain shall we ascribe this, intirely, to discipline or culture. We must have recourse to the frame and make of the mind, and the Creator's power displayed in it. But who knows to what length that power could carry, and in some stages of existence may in fact carry, this delicacy and sensibility of delight? How high the joys which God may thus bestow upon us? And how intire is our dependence upon him, when not only the objects of gratification, not only the capacities and powers of receiving it, are his workmanship, but even the precise measure and degree of it, in the sensations we possess!

Farther, as an addition to all present enjoyment of the objects with which we are conversant, we have also all the pleasures which spring from the hope of future good; which are, in many cases, much greater than all that we now possess; more important to us; and without which life itself would be very miserable. All this is of God, who has given us the

SERM. faculty of looking into futurity, and of  
 XIV. realizing what is appointed to come to  
 pass, in very distant stages of existence.

When we turn our thoughts to pain, on the other hand; how clearly do we see, and with what awe does it strike the mind, that we are all liable to great sufferings, which it is not in our power to prevent! the pains of the body which are innumerable (I speak now of what the bodily state is liable to) are often very alarming; but yet of small account, when compared with those of the mind. Some of which however, (indeed the most acute and intolerable of them, arising from a consciousness of great guilt) by a regular life and good conduct, we may escape. And here our rejoicing is this, that under that being in whose power we absolutely are, if we sincerely do his will, it shall be well with us. We shall escape the torments of a guilty conscience, and all those evils which are the effects of Divine indignation. Without assurance of this, who could rejoice in existence, or account it at all a blessing? But, as was said, when we contemplate human nature as liable to innumerable evils, from which  
 there

there is no defence but in God ; how feel-  
ingly does this convince us of our depend-  
ence upon him ! What was above ob-  
S E R M. XIV.

erved concerning pleasure, holds true also  
with respect to pain. That the measure of  
it in the various circumstances of suffer-  
ing, and the sensibility of it, which we see  
in different persons, is very different.  
Some shall bear without much complaint,  
what would make other men very misera-  
ble. And we see that sensibility some-  
times arise to such a degree, that men  
in circumstances not very uncommon,  
yet suffer the greatest anguish and pain,  
that can well be imagined ; Their minds  
upon the rack, and their own imagina-  
tions, like the worst and most implacable  
of furies, tormenting them ! No reasoning  
with them of any avail to mitigate their  
sufferings, nor any consolation admitted !  
This is a very deplorable state ; and men  
have been seen to fall into it, whose cir-  
cumstances in life were far from being  
distressful, and even such whose lives were  
far from being bad. Human nature can  
hardly appear in a more humbling state,  
than in some such cases. And from them

we



SERM. we may learn, that there needs no more

**XIV.** to make us very wretched, than the letting loose our own imaginations upon us.

In these and such like particulars we may see our absolute dependence upon the supreme Being, that in him we live, and move, and have our subsistence. Our bodies, as to the very existence, as well as frame of them; our minds, in all their powers, affections, and actings; our pleasures, and our pains, are all, and altogether, dependent upon God. He is ever present with us; his power constantly employed about us; without which we could have no continued existence.

From all this it may appear, that it was a very wrong kind of philosophy which taught that the world might have been by the Divine power, at first, so constituted, and such laws given it, that without any continued application of that power it might subsist, and persevere in the course in which it was at the beginning. And that it required equal energy to annihilate any thing, as to create it. This philosophy is overthrown by what was observed, in the beginning of this discourse, concerning matter, namely, that

no

no such thing can ever have any existence SERM.  
XIV.  
but by the immediate energy of Divine power; and that the qualities of attraction, cohesion, &c. by which it is, what it is, are no other than the effects of this energy: For, if these things be so, there would be no more requisite to annihilate matter, or which is the same thing to the purposes of the creation and of life, to make it cease to be what it now is, than a suspension of that power by which at first it existed. Because, if there be no attraction, no cohesion of parts, there can be no matter; and when the power of attraction and cohesion ceases to act, the effects, that is, attraction, and cohesion, cease to be. It is therefore much more rational to suppose a constant presence, and energy of the Divine mind, on the things which are made: and that the Providence by which they subsist, is in truth, a continued creation of them.

I should now shew to what practical purposes these principles may be improved, but the time will not allow me to enter upon this at present. I shall therefore conclude with this one observation:

That when we see our dependence upon

SERM. on the supreme mind is so absolute, for

XIV. life and all the powers of it ; we are therefore not to wonder that the holy scriptures speak so much of a Divine agency upon the mind of man ; as also of our asking, and receiving help from God, in carrying on the great and important purposes of life and religion. *God gives wisdom and counsel. The inspiration of the Almighty teaches men understanding.* Our Saviour promises that *God's holy spirit shall be given to them who ask him.* We are taught that *God works in us to will and to do of his good pleasure.* And we see the New Testament writers celebrate the grace of God, as that to which they owe their all as Christians. These expressions, however strong, have been so explained as almost quite to lose their meaning, by some who found them not very consistent with a scheme in philosophy of which they were fond. But the more we attend to ourselves, and to the frame and workings of our own minds, we shall be the more convinced of an important reality in a Divine agency upon the minds of men ; and shall be the more encouraged to ask help from God, and to depend upon him.

The

The manner of this, indeed, we shall not **SERM.**  
be able to explain ; as how few of the **XIV.**  
most obvious things in nature can we ex-  
plain ? but this is no objection against the  
possibility or even the probability of such  
agency. Nay so far does it appear, upon  
thoroughly inquiring into these matters,  
from being improbable, that it seems ma-  
nifestly absurd not to suppose it.

**SERMON**



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# SERMON XV.

Practical reflections arising from a  
sense of our absolute dependence  
on God.

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ACTS, 17. 28.

*For in Him we live, and move, and have  
our being.*

**SERM.** **F**EW things do we see in nature, but  
**XV.** what are mysterious to us. Out-  
ward appearances, and the manner in  
which various objects affect us, we know  
as facts; but when we come to inquire  
into the real causes of things, their nature  
and manner of operation, we find our  
researches quickly at an end. And if we  
are

are at a loss with respect to the most ob-  
vious things, and which are most familiar

SERM.

XV.

to us, how much less shall mortal man  
*by searching find out God, or find out the al-*  
*mighty to perfection?* Who knows the man-  
ner of his operations? Who can account  
for the omnipresence of his power, the  
subsistence of things in it, and the pro-  
duction of the astonishing appearances we  
see by it? Thus far, however, from the  
plainest and most undeniable principles,  
and by just reasoning from them, we are  
taught; that there is a power of the first  
intelligent cause every where exerted in  
the universe; and that this is the foun-  
dation of the existence of all things in it;  
and that the general fixed laws of nature  
are the exertions of this power, according  
to those rules and measures which infinite  
wisdom at first laid down, for serving the  
great purposes which are to be carried on  
in the universe.

In the former discourse, I considered  
this with a particular view to mankind;  
and shewed you our immediate depend-  
ence upon the Divine being, for our sub-  
sistence; for all the powers of sensation  
and action, for imagination, memory, and  
our

SERM. our moral powers ; and in conclusion,  
 XV. shewed, that the language of the holy  
 scripture, with respect to those things, is  
 perfectly consonant to what reason teaches.  
 The illustration of this argument,  
 necessarily led to some things, which, tho'  
 important and evidently true, yet are not  
 obvious to every capacity : But the use  
 and improvement to be made of it, is very  
 obvious ; which is proposed as the subject  
 of the present discourse.

The first thing that strikes the mind,  
 in meditating upon this subject, is admiration  
 of that original eternal being, in  
 whom we live, and move ; who is every  
 where present, whose eye is upon every  
 creature, whose power is every where at  
 once exerted, maintaining the general laws  
 of nature, and by particular providences  
 interposing, as to infinite wisdom seemeth  
 fit. He is present, not in this world only,  
 not in this system only, but in all worlds,  
 wherever existing in the whole immensity  
 of space. Nor shall we find much difficulty  
 in admitting this, provided we can  
 conceive the idea of the same power exerted  
 in several places at once. For if the  
 same power may be exerted, in several  
 places

places at once, it may be exerted in all places at once. That is, there is no absurdity, or contradiction, in the one, more than the other. But indeed, how astonishing is the thought! One mind every where present, and acting every where! Surely such knowledge is too wonderful for us; it is high, we cannot attain to it! How amazing that power, which governs all the worlds on high, with perfect consistency, with perfect ease! To look up to the heavens, and starry firmament, when shining in all its glories; to think of the immensity and number of these bodies; and that they are all made by, all under the direction of one hand; that from the beginning, till now, they have preserved their order exactly; and that in all the swiftness, and force of motion, throughout the universe, nothing has befallen to cause any confusion in it! And moreover, that by the same laws of general providence, by which these, to us inconceivably great bodies, are governed, even the least animal, plant, spire of grass, and grain of sand, are also taken care of, and regulated according to the order of their beings; surely, no attentive mind,

SERM.

XV.



SERMON can contemplate all this, without profound

XV. adoration ! I have often thought it not at all wonderful, that the nations who had lost the knowledge of the true God, in a great measure, should have fallen into that way of thinking, which very generally prevailed among them, of distributing the several parts of the universe, to be taken care of by several Divinities ; tho' at the same time, the wisest of them acknowledged but one original, to whom all the rest were subordinated, and from whom they sprung ; for it must be owned, the narrowness of the human mind might be much at a loss, in conceiving the same individual, active principle, exerting a power every where, and at the same time ! yet how much nobler the thought, that the same original principle is really every where present, and that every creature has its subsistence in, and is govern'd by it ! How does this raise our admiration of the being who made us, *in whose hand our breath is, and whose are all our ways !*

And surely, in good minds, this admiration must be attended with great joy. We know that this Being who made, sustains and governs us, is perfectly good ;

and

and that the communication of happiness SER M.  
 is a real ultimate end, which is pursued XV.  
 in the whole work of creation and pro-  
 vidence. Now, this Being is ever present  
 to us: In him we have our existence, we  
 live in him, and ever must, in every cir-  
 cumstance, in every state, in every world,  
 in which he shall think fit to place us;  
 in every point of eternal duration, in e-  
 very point of immense space, as his good  
 pleasure shall appoint. He is, and he is the  
 same for ever. The poetical expression of  
 the Psalmist is very pleasing. *Thou hast  
 been our dwelling place in all generations.  
 Before the mountains were brought forth, or  
 ever thou hadst formed the earth; even from  
 everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.*

But here a thought of very great im-  
 portance, will naturally come across our  
 minds; namely, that we are not in the  
 same state with many species of creatures  
 we behold, subsisted also by the divine  
 bounty, but necessarily determined in their  
 motions, and actions, so as to answer the  
 end of their being. Whereas we are made  
 capable of knowing right and wrong; and  
 are under a law to God, by obeying which  
 sincerely, we become the objects of his

SERMON. favour; as on the contrary, by disobedience and rebellion, we shall certainly fall under his displeasure. We can plainly collect this from the very frame of human nature, and the powers of conscience planted in us: We likewise have it very clearly declared, and frequently inculcated in the holy scriptures. Now this view of things, strikes the mind with awe. Can a wicked man rejoice in God? Is it not rather terror to him to think of such a being, so perfectly holy, so powerful? Certainly it must. *There is no peace saith my God to the wicked.* For, if such will but give themselves leave to think, they must perceive that they are under an administration, which never will, never can favour them. They must be sensible that they deserve, and that they are liable to punishment from God. And which of them can say what that punishment shall be? Indeed, the utter loss of virtue must, in its own nature, make creatures framed as we are, miserable, as well as deprive them of the noblest happiness, which undoubtedly results only from virtue. Inasmuch that considering human nature, abstractedly from any relation in which we may

may be supposed to stand to the supreme SERM.  
Being, as our moral governor, yet to be XV.  
very wicked must issue in being very  
wretched. But certainly it is an additional consideration of great weight, *that the face of God is set against them that do evil*; and that he will certainly interpose, as a ruler and judge, to punish them; that by every criminal action, they expose themselves to his displeasure, and, as the scriptures speak, *are treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God*. He knows all the evil thoughts and dispositions of their minds, and the principles upon which they have acted, as unerringly as the misdeed of their hands; and will judge impartially, *for he is no respecter of persons*. External distinctions, great fortunes, eminent privileges and endowments, make no difference in his estimation; according to the real temper of the mind, and to the tenor of the conversation, he will judge.

On the other hand, *light is shewn for the upright, and gladness for the righteous*. If men know it has been their study to avoid offence, and to please God by obeying the law of their nature; if they have been



SERM. carefully observant of all intimations of  
 XV. the divine will, however made known to them; if they are really watchful over themselves, and in points wherein they have failed are sincerely penitent, labouring to amend for the future; and if the fruits of righteousness appear in them; then will they have the testimony of their consciences, and hope in God, which must necessarily be attended with great joy. Such have the divine favour ever with them, taking care of them, and conducting them through the various stages of life, to the perfection and happiness intended for them; their strong stay and support under all afflictions and discouragements; and the sure foundation of hope amidst all events. No more is to be wished. And doubtless, it is one of the most pleasing of all reflections, that we are, in the divine estimation, according to the real moral character only. Let a man's endowments be ever so low; his circumstances and state in the world ever so obscure; let external disadvantages, and afflictions, multiply around him; yet, if he is a person of real worth, God knows him and loves him; and will undoubtedly

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ly, in the properest and best time, inter-  
pose to give him the most substantial testi-  
monies of his favour.

SERM.  
XV.  
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These reflections naturally lead to the next thing I would insist upon, viz. that a sense of our living and having our being in God, is a consideration of the greatest weight to deter us from all evil; and to engage us, with growing delight, in the practice of all virtue. From what has been already said, it evidently follows, that God knows, and sees all our actions, nay, even the very thoughts of our hearts; as being ever most intimately present with us. Now, is there not the greatest reverence due to such a presence? Ingenuous minds are very careful to behave with great and exact decency, before those who are much superior to them; especially before persons of eminent and distinguished worth. And any indignity done to such persons, any thing which shews negligence and disregard of them, is very justly accounted abominable. Men who have any sense of worth, or even of decency, will shew them great regard, and study a behaviour agreeable to them. But here, when compared with divine Majesty

SERMON. and perfection, the greatest and worthiest
 XV. of mortals, vanish, as it were, into nothing. Can it be then, that an ingenuous mind attentive to the presence of this matchless Being, will venture upon any action, or even indulge any thought, which he knows is displeasing, and a manifest indignity to him? Will not such a one study that kind of temper and behaviour which is dutiful towards God, and shews a just regard to his perfect purity and perfection? God's eye is now upon me, will he say; what I am tempted to do is offensive and displeasing to him; and shall I be so lost to all sense of decency, and ingenuity, as to proceed to such an action? No surely, were there no punishments to be dreaded, a liberal mind possessed with sentiments of true honour, would abhor it.

This will appear in a stronger light when it is considered, that those very powers which men prostitute to immorality of any kind, are all the gifts of God to them; and maintained and supported by him, according to the general laws of nature. So that, without God, we could do nothing, could possess nothing, could have

have no enjoyment of life ; and is it not SERM.
extremely unnatural, when we know we XV.
have our beings, and our powers, in God,
to profane them to his dishonour ? The
understandings, and sagacity, which the
cunning and treacherous employ in bring-
ing to pass their wicked devices, are the
understandings which God has given them.
The hands which are lifted up in a cruel,
or otherwise wicked action, are the hands
which he has made, and to which he gives
power to act. That tongue which blas-
phemes his name, has God given, as the
peculiar glory of the human frame : And
do men thus requite the Lord ? abusing
his favours to the worst purposes, and
which are an impious offence against him ?
If we would soberly think on this, surely,
it would beget an aversion against all
wickedness, which must then appear most
disingenuous, and ungrateful. Nor can
any man, one would think, persuaded of
the truth of the divine existence, govern-
ment, and presence with him, come to
such a deliberate resolution as this, “ not-
withstanding I have my being in God,
“ and all my powers from him, and tho’
“ his eye is this moment upon me, yet
“ I will

SERM. "I will gratify my present evil desire;

XV. "though it be to his dishonour, and that
 "I know it will displease him; and no
 "sense of decency, of duty, or gratitude
 "to him, shall hinder me." Could any
 man entertain such a thought? How much
 less could he express himself so? And yet
 this is, in reality, the true language of
 every presumptuous sin which men, who
 are not quite infidels, commit; I do not
 mean that they have it, in this manner,
 in their thoughts; or are capable of set-
 ting God so deliberately at defiance; but
 the action is the same as if they did; and
 is, in truth, a violation of all the rules of
 decency, gratitude, and duty.

However, if ingenuous principles have
 no power over the mind, let men still
 consider, how they hurt themselves in
 breaking the laws of God. They have
 their existence in him; are perfectly at his
 disposal; have no strength at all to resist
 him; nor is there any power in the uni-
 verse which may deliver out of his hand:
 How dreadful then the state of men when
 God is angry; when he awakes to avenge
 his injured honour! *If I lift up my glit-
 tering sword, and my hand taketh hold of
 vengeance,*

our absolute dependence, &c.

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vengeance, I will render a recompense to mine SERM.
enemies, a reward to them who hate me. XV.

Consider how dreadful are the appearances of Divine Majesty, even in this world; and how awful his judgments of sword, famine, and pestilence! how many thousands do these devour! How dreadful did God appear, when he commanded that deluge which overwhelmed the world, one righteous man and his family excepted! these judgments shew, that there may be great seeming severity in the divine administration; and that Goodness in God, though most perfect, is yet consistent with his inflicting grievous punishment upon the wicked. Nay indeed it requires this, as a thing necessary for the good of the creation, that great whole, which is constantly under the divine care. In this we may rest assured, that God will inflexibly do what perfect wisdom and goodness require. In him that weakness of compassion by which good, but imperfect minds, are often betrayed into wrong actions, can have no place. How deeply ought this to be considered by bad men! Let the terrors of God alarm them. No man fully knows what a load of misery
he

SERM. he is heaping up for himself, by an
 XV. immoral course of life. God has assured
 us he will punish. This we are clearly
 taught in the Holy Scriptures; the lan-
 guage of which is perfectly agreeable to
 that of our own consciences: But the de-
 gree of punishment who can tell? And
 without doubt, *it is a fearful thing to fall
 into the hands of the living God!* To have
 him for an enemy; whose look makes the
 earth to tremble; before whom *the ever-
 lasting mountains are scattered!*

But on the other hand, that God is ever
 present with us, that *in him we live, and
 move, and have our beings*, gives the noblest
 encouragement to the practice of virtue.
 This is the proper method of expressing
 our reverence and regard to the divine
 Majesty; virtue alone has that true de-
 corum and propriety in it, which will be
 pleasing to the sovereign judge. And all
 professions of love and regard to him, with-
 out it, are perfectly hypocritical, and will
 be an abomination to him. We know
 also, that as this is the only way, so is it
 the certain way of pleasing him. He de-
 lights in the righteous; a consideration
 that must be of the utmost weight with
 honest

honest and liberal minds, who cannot do **SERM.**
the abominable thing which God hates; **XV.**

and will be a great incentive, in their doing of that which is good. Such is the natural use of the powers which God gives, and which he every moment maintains. Herein lies that pleasing order and harmony, which is the glory of the moral world. And surely we can never appear in a more amiable and delightful view to the Divine eye, than when we not only act from good principles, and in pursuance of the laws of our nature, by doing that which is right; but above all, when we feel such steady attachment to it; such a sincere love to God, and resolution to please him, as no temptations can overcome. So that any loss will be sustained, any pains and severities of self-denial endured, rather than we will endure to do what is offensive to God. How pleasing to him the internal conflicts of virtuous men with the remains of corrupt passion, and moral infirmity, and all their victories over them! It was the observation of an antient moralist, that eminent virtue struggling with misfortune, and going through the trials of it with decency, and firmness, was an object

SERMON. ject so excellent, as to entertain even the

XV. Gods themselves.

—pect not only to the conflicts of virtue with external calamity, but with our own irregular affections and passions, and with the spirit of this world: Sincerely approving itself in resisting, and overcoming these, is the noblest sacrifice we can offer to God; who in such a case, will behold us with a pleased countenance. What invincible resolution may this give to the believing mind!

Besides, what consolation to think, that he *in whom we live and move and have our being*, as he perfectly knows our sincere attachments to virtue, will be ever present to assist us! He can give us most effectual aid, and he certainly will do it, according to his gracious promises: So that in pursuing the great ends of virtue, we are sure we shall happily succeed. Of this reality of the divine assistance, and of its consistency with the frame of our natures, I spoke, in the preceding discourse; and shall not now insist upon it. Doubtless it is a most pleasing reflection, that in doing sincerely that which is good, we have the present aid of that original

Being

Being, in whom we live and move; who SERM.
 gave us our powers, and can strengthen XV.
 them to every good work. Who, as he
 governs the world, and nature in all its
 parts, according to general laws, establish-
 ed for the good of the whole, to which
 they are absolutely necessary; so can
 he, at the same time, consistently with
 these laws, take care of every individual;
 and interpose, as it becomes necessary, to
 aid us by his power, in serving the true
 ends and purposes of human life. Ma-
 ny there be who spend their time, and
 strength, for very vanity; pursuing what
 they can never obtain; or, if they could
 obtain it, what can contribute very little
 to true happiness. While they, who by a
patient continuance in well doing, seek for
glory, honour and immortality, are sure of
 success; for God is with them, and their
 success will abundantly answer their ex-
 pectation. Happiness, of the noblest kind,
 will be their reward. Thrice happy,
 to have these principles so impress'd upon
 our minds, as to be ever present to them!
 to feel the power of them, in deter-
 mining us in the whole conduct of life!
 this would make all go well. But alas!
 how

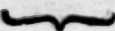
SERMON. how often do we think, and speak, with-
 XV. out feeling! and while we assent to the
 truth, shew, at the same time, that it has
 little power over us! this is our reproach,
 and great unhappiness.

Lastly, let us learn from what we most
 assuredly know, and believe, concerning
 our living and having our existence in God,
 to be meekly submissive to all the conduct
 of his providence toward us. We know
 that we are ever under his eye; and that
he performeth the things appointed for us:
 This is a most substantial reason for our
 being resigned in all events. Those mis-
 taken men who labour to banish the no-
 tion of a superintending particular pro-
 vidence out of the world, as they are apt
 to run into the wildest speculations, so, one
 would think their minds must be in a most
 unsettled, and uneasy state. A blind fate,
 which is without counsel; or chance, of
 which no rational account can be given,
 and which is indeed rather a word with-
 out any meaning; is what such men, in
 effect, substitute in the room of that glo-
 rious Being who made, and who governs
 all things. At least, when good counsel is
 not supposed to prevail in the universe,
 nor

nor any worthy end to be pursued; all SERM. must appear as a vast heap of confusion; XV.

as the shadow of death, without any order. There is then no peaceful rest for the mind, on occasions of danger and distress; the prospect into futurity, even with respect to the greatest and most important concerns, is clouded with uncertainty; and there is no substantial support, under the pressure of present evil. How much more rationally, and more to the satisfaction of the mind, do they think, who believe that the universe is the work of a mind perfectly wise, powerful and good; who is ever present to all its parts, sustaining and governing the whole; and who, having originally formed a design worthy of the inconceivable greatness of the architect, and of the work, is constantly, by the general laws of nature, and the particular dispensations of providence, carrying this design into execution. The presence, and providence, of this perfectly wise and good Being, is the sure foundation of peace and tranquillity to the mind. And while we truly believe that he governs all, resignation of spirit will appear to be perfectly rational, a most amiable, a most important virtue.

SERM. How absurd must it be, when a man is

XV.  convinced of his absolute dependence upon God, whose power is always irresistible, to set himself as it were in opposition to the measures of the divine administration, and to the course of providence by which events are determined: And, while he can do nothing effectual in opposition to them, how wretchedly absurd to shew the restiveness of his spirit in murmurs, and the various expressions of discontent. Is this like reason, though duty and interest, were not at all concern'd in the case? *The potters* of the earth contending with him who made them! it is like opposing our feeble breath to a tempest; or setting ourselves to resist the lightnings of heaven. Vain attempts, which shew the distractions of a disquieted spirit, but can never answer any good end! How much wiser is it, with quiet spirits to bear what we cannot alter; and to submit unreluctant, when necessity is laid upon us! Thus the burthen becomes much easier, to which a disposition to murmur and repine, is always a great additional weight.

Thus

Thus far however the point of pru-^{SERM.}
dence only is considered: but what we ^{XV.}
are principally to attend to is, our duty.

We owe to the Creator and Lord of all, an unreserved submission; not because we are his creatures only, or principally; but because we are sure he governs the world, and the affairs of it, with perfect wisdom and goodness. Now, under his administration we may consider ourselves either as individuals, under his care, and having our state or lot appointed by him; or, as being related to one great whole, the true interest of which he is carrying on; and in which there may be certain relations and dependencies of parts, which make it necessary for him to appoint events affecting certain individuals, which events, but for these relations, and their connexion with the whole, would not come to pass.

There is no difficulty in conceiving, for it evidently appears to be fact in many instances, that what may be necessary for the good of a system, or whole, may be apparently hurtful to individuals. Now, when these individuals know that the instances in which they suffer are really for the good of the whole; and that infinite

SERM. wisdom would otherwise never have appointed them ; this greatly tends to quiet the mind, and make it easy. Such men know, and are sure that their sufferings do not proceed from any malevolence in the supreme ruler ; but come to pass in such a course of things as the most perfect wisdom has contrived : and must own, that if the administration of things were in their own hands, and their hearts set upon that which is the greatest good on the whole, they would have conducted affairs just in the same manner as now they are. It is true, the selfish spirit may be apt to reply to this, what is the good of the whole to me ? What comfort is it, that in my sufferings other creatures find their account ? To which it may be answered, that hardly any man can be so selfish as not to make a great difference, between that evil to him, which a public interest makes necessary, and that which is supposed to be the fruit of ill will to himself ; he must see that there is reason for his being patient of the one, when yet he would most keenly resent the other. But there is a much more substantial consideration prepared for virtuous minds,
and

and which intirely removes the difficulty: SERMON.
Such do know that virtue is the most ex- **XV.**
cellent thing in the creation of God, and
that the happiness resulting from it is the
greatest, and most satisfying: Consequent-
ly, whatever schemes infinite wisdom and
goodness have framed, must be always, upon
the whole, friendly to virtue; and it is never
to be imagined that the divine mind should
appoint a course of things, in which the
most excellent thing of all, and the most
necessary to happiness, should be neglected,
or finally suffer. And, therefore, the wor-
thy and virtuous who are sufferers in those
things which providence appoints for the
greater public good, have reason to believe
that in the final issue, those very things
shall issue to their advantage. But far-
ther, when we consider ourselves as in-
dividuals, and in a state of discipline, we
may easily see very good reasons why ad-
versity is appointed for us; we may often
see a necessity of it; and are perhaps, in
our own particular case, very sensible of
great advantages accruing from it. The
God who gives us all the good which is
fit and necessary for us, will permit no
more evil than what is thus fit. And as

SERM. experience shews that very afflicting dis-

XV. penfations have been really to our advantage, in the past stages of life; we have good reason to think that there is the same gracious and friendly intention, in those which we now suffer. Here then is a sure foundation laid for tranquillity of spirit, for satisfaction with the administration of providence. And from such principles, we see there is wisdom, and decency, and duty, in a meek resignation of heart to the will of God.

The truth is, when we consider that by his providence things come to pass, that he is perfectly wise and gracious, and that he regards the interests of every individual as a part of the great whole; then, surely, the murmuring spirit should become quite ashamed, and out of countenance; still more, if there be any piety of affection, and dutiful sentiments, nay even wisdom and regard to decency; the language of the heart must be, *it is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.* For he never will, never can, do any thing which is not fit to be done. And not to be satisfied with this, speaks a most unnatural state of the mind.

To

To conclude, let us ever bear in mind SERMON.
the presence of God with us, and our de- XV.
pendence upon him. You see this will
not only prove very comfortable, but very
useful to us. Possibly, nothing has more
impaired the religion of the present age,
than inattention to God, and to the duty
we owe him. Some men placing the
whole of religion in morality, in the con-
fined sense of that word, as only signifying
honesty in their transactions with man-
kind, charity to the distressed, and the
private virtues of temperance, and the
like; which are no doubt of the utmost
importance; but at the same time making
light of the exercises of piety, as of very
little moment. It is a plausible reason
which some men have been heard to give
for this, that our services cannot profit
our Maker; and that all the design of
them is to make us honest and good. Be
it so; yet still are not those exercises of
piety, which are the natural and proper
expressions of our love to God, as much
according to the law of our nature, as any
other duty? Can any thing be more ob-
viously incumbent upon us, than the love
of God, dutiful submission to him, and all

SERM. the proper expressions of these, in our behaviour? We cannot profit our Maker, it is true. What then, are we not to love him, and obey him? And is not this to be shewn in that manner which is proper, and natural, in all our behaviour and actions?

After all, it must be owned that the greatest reason for the service of God, in acts of piety, is that it will certainly prove the most effectual security of our virtue. Piety greatly tends to preserve upon the mind, a sense and awe of the Divine presence; and to give men a purity of taste which makes them abhorrent of all immoral acts. Nay more, there is something in the exercises of piety, which admirably raises and enlarges the heart, weans it from the love of this world, begets heavenly desires, and fills the mind with a joy which is pure and unfading. These are surely valuable purposes; and it is time enough to become indifferent about religious exercises, and acts of devotion to God, when we know these purposes are perfectly served. But, in truth, if they ever are really so, it must be by our having attained to a temper perfect in
the

the love of God, and charity ; and when SERM.
that is the case, devotion to God will be XV.
so far from being neglected, that it will
become the principal enjoyment of life :
By love to God, men will be naturally,
and most certainly determined, to all
those services in which they have com-
munion with him. And on the contrary,
we may most certainly conclude, that
where men are negligent of their Creator,
and of his service, their temper and moral
state must be very imperfect ; and that
the love of God doth not in truth reign
in them.

SERMON XVI.

What is imported in keeping the heart, and the best means of doing it.

PROV. 4. 23.

Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.

SERM. XVI. **W**HAT constitutes our supreme good, or chief happiness, is the most material of all inquiries; and according to the sentiments of men concerning this subject, the whole of life will naturally be regulated. We find ourselves in a state in which we are liberally furnished with means of external comforts and enjoyments; in these we find pleasure,

sure, and we know that our Creator intended this pleasure for us, to sweeten life, and render it agreeable. He has also contrived a variety in it, that so in all the diversity of temper and taste which is seen in mankind, each individual may find what is agreeable to himself. The pleasures which are first tasted consist in the gratification of the appetites and desires of animal nature: By degrees men become sensible, and this very soon, that according to the present state and established relations of things, they cannot have this gratification but by means of their possessing so much (which they can call their own) as may be equal to the purchase of it. Hence the desire of acquiring, and possessing, naturally springs up in the mind; altho' I cannot say that this desire is intirely owing to a sense of exigency and need, and to the reflections of the mind upon this; for indeed it seems to be an appetite originally planted in nature, suitable, as all the other appetites and instincts are, to the present state of nature; and which, like them, prevents reasoning and reflection; at least this is evidently fact, that in many, such desire is strong, and

SERM.

XVI.

SERM. and that to a very vicious degree, even
XVI. when they have actually in possession all
that heart could wish; and does often so
prevail, as to make the mere possession of
much, rather than the enjoyment of what
men do possess, their greatest felicity.
But there are likewise pleasures of ano-
ther sort, and more manly, in fame, in
power, in authority, and in those im-
provements of life which knowledge and
learning yield: And these, especially the
last, are, by all generous minds, much
preferred before the gratifications of sen-
sual desire, and mere animal nature. Still it
is certain, that men may attain to very high
degrees in all these things, now mentioned,
and yet be very imperfect in their moral
characters; nay in a great measure void
of virtue. But at the same time it will be
acknowledged by all, that virtue has its
pleasures, and affords a real felicity; which
many, whatever they may profess in words,
do not seem to think is of the most substan-
tial kind; while others do indeed esteem
it far above all other things. Now, whe-
ther it is really worthy of such estimation,
is a point that every man must settle in
his own mind. However, to such as real-
ly

ly believe this, their way in life lies clear SERM.
before them; they are with constant care XVI.
to cultivate the virtuous and good affec-
tions; and, so far as they can, to make
all the business of life, all events and cir-
cumstances in it, subservient to their im-
provement in such affections. And to
such it will appear to be the most impor-
tant of all concernments, that *they keep*
their hearts with all diligence, seeing out of
them are the issues of life, and of that hap-
piness which is their chief good.

Every man is in a good measure direct-
ed by the light of nature, what affections
and desires are good and virtuous; as also,
when they become evil, by being irregu-
lar. Especially such as enjoy revelation,
and are well instructed in the religion of
Christ, they cannot fail of having an idea
of a certain moral character, a certain
state of the affections, which it is the de-
sign of all the discipline of our present
state to bring men to; in which character
virtue is compleated, and from whence the
highest happiness we can enjoy in this
life, arises; such also must be sensible, if
they attend carefully to their own hearts,
in what instances they come short of this
character;

SERM. character; and by what particular amend-
XVI. ments of life these defects are to be supplied.

But as all the actions of life, good or bad, are the fruits of the present prevailing temper, so it is evident, that, in the reformation of life, our labour and application ought to be directed to the regulation of the temper principally, and the state of the affections. For, when, by indulging to the desires and passions an unrestrained licence, they become corrupt and vicious, when the heart becomes the impure and loathsome source of evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false-witness, blasphemies, and such other vices, it will require great and most resolved, and constant application, indeed the assistance of a higher power than our own, to conquer such vicious habits, and to restore the heart from a state so ruinous to its natural moral dignity. This is so great a thing, that in the Holy Scriptures it is represented as a new creation, as a resurrection from the dead, as the renewal of the spirit; however, there are means and methods pointed out to us by nature, as well as revelation,

tion, which we are encouraged to hope, SERM.
will, in the sincere and diligent use of XVI.
of them, prove effectual.

But if men have been so happy as by the influence of early religious impressions made on their minds, and of a good and virtuous education, to have in a great measure escaped the pollution which is in the world through lust ; or if they have, by the power of conscience, and of the religion of Christ, been recovered from wicked courses of life, and a corrupted state of the spirit ; still they are to consider themselves, while they are in this world, and beset with manifold temptations, as in danger of being led astray, and of suffering in their temper and moral character ; so that a careful attention to the heart, and affections, is necessary. And as this is the most effectual preservative of our integrity, so it is the most effectual means of making progress in virtue. It becomes, and most highly concerns us, *to keep our hearts with all diligence, for as much as out of them are the issues of life.*

In discoursing upon which words, I shall, first, make a few such observations upon

SERM. upon the keeping of the heart, as may

XVI. contribute to explain the meaning of it.

Secondly, I shall lay before you the most effectual helps to our doing this with success.

Thirdly, Recommend and urge it from the consideration Solomon suggests, that out of the heart are the issues of life.

First, I am to make some observations which may contribute to explain the meaning of the precept in the text.

We need not, it should seem, be told that we are each of us endowed with a power of reflecting upon our own desires and affections, and with a certain invariable standard within us, by which we are enabled to judge whether these inward principles are right or wrong. Nor should we need to be told, that our affections and passions are in a great measure under the influence of conscience, and of the superior calm principles, and instincts, by which it was intended they should be controlled. These things are obvious; as also that we are answerable to the Creator and judge of all, for our affections as well as actions; and that consequently, it is our business always to attend to the

State

state of our affections; and to make the S E R M.
regulating them aright our principal care. **XVI.**

We are to keep our hearts with all diligence,
or, as the phrase is strictly englished, to keep
them above all keeping; to be concerned
for nothing else as much.

A great variety of affections enter into our
frame, as the constituent parts of human
nature. And from what particular affec-
tion or passion is it, that we are not in
danger of suffering in our integrity, if the
workings of it are not attended to, and
the exorbitancies of it restrained? So that
the mental eye ought to be every where,
and all the passions carefully observed.
Especially, this will appear to be necessa-
ry, when it is considered, that inclination
and desire have a most powerful influence,
to darken the mind, to set things in a
partial and false light; by this means im-
posing upon us, and betraying us into
what is wrong, under delusive colours.
Against this deceit we ought to be most
carefully guarded; and without a constant
watch over, and jealousy of ourselves,
without a careful and impartial inquiry
into the real quality and tendency of our
dispositions and desires, we are not pre-

SERMON. pared to keep our hearts with any success. Now, to answer this intention, and fulfil it, it is not enough that we resist those motions of our hearts which are clearly perceived to be corrupt and evil; but moreover there must be pains taken, that we may not be *hardened by the deceitfulness of sin*. If for instance, a man indulges covetousness, under the notion of frugality; or pride under that of greatness of mind; or vicious luxury, as innocent gratification, or commendable generosity; however he may be pure in his own eyes, yet he keeps his heart to very little purpose. This ought to be much considered by us, as we see many instances in which men thus deceive themselves; and it is much if we have not found such dangerous deceptions in our own case. The very notion of keeping the heart implies in it, that we know what is right, and what is wrong; but surely our knowledge of this, in general, is of little use, unless we are capable of applying it to our own affections in particular, and of judging rightly concerning them.

It may be farther observed, that in the state of our affections, considered with respect

respect to the purposes of morality, we may err as much from the weakness or utter deficiency of one, as from the vehemence and exorbitance of another. Affections are intended to be springs of action in us. Now, on supposition that we have an affection which is good in some given degree, but have it not in such a degree as to become a spring of action; to all the good intents and purposes of human life, and of our acceptance with God, this is as if we had it not at all; for in these respects, that is not in reality, which does not at all answer the end. A man, suppose, loves his country; but yet loves it not to that degree as to do any thing laborious, any thing that will be detrimental to his private interest, for the sake of it—He loves the cause of religion and virtue; but he will not suffer any thing for them—He sympathizes with the poor and miserable, so far as to wish them well; but he will give them nothing of his substance—kind words, *be thou warmed, be thou filled,* are all they have to expect. Surely therefore, the keeping of the heart must imply in it that we be careful, by all proper means, to strengthen and cultivate those

SERM affections which are found weak and defective in degree; for by this we may suffer in our moral state and character, as much as by the overgrown strength and vehemence of other passions. Especially this will appear to be of great moment, when it is considered, that many of our affections are not only of different but of opposite tendencies; heavenly desire, for example, and inclination to the good things of this life, to temporal possessions; private affection or self love, and benevolence, or regard to the public good. These are all planted in the heart, and they are necessary in our frame, at least in the present state of things. *The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other.* They are set in reality, like antagonist muscles in the body. When one of these latter comes paralytic, and has lost its power, the other appears to have gained the strength which it had lost; and so the part comes to be distorted, which while the just proportion of the opposite powers was maintained, continued in its proper form. Just so, when any of the antagonist affections, so to speak, is weak
and

and has lost its power, the opposite affection carries all before it without resistance; thus will self love act in the man who has not benevolence, and regard to a public in him, in such a degree as to become a principle of action; and so also will inclination to this earth, and the enjoyments of our present state, in that character in whom the love of God, and heavenly desire, are not in such strength as to control it. Hence then it is as necessary that we should give all diligence in strengthening good affections, which are culpably weak and defective, as in restraining such as are boisterous and vehement: And a little attention will shew where our application of this sort is most needed.

Farther, the irregularity of our affections is owing either to a strong natural propensity, or to such as has been acquired by habit; so that it works without any stimulus or provocation from without; or else such irregular affection is owing to our conversing with external objects which powerfully excite them. Now, certainly, if we mean to keep the heart with success, we must carefully avoid such objects as

SERM. are apt to excite passions in us which are
 XVI. irregular, and so become dangerous temptations. For example, who that intends to maintain the purity of his taste, and the integrity and tranquillity of his spirit, will not carefully avoid the filthy conversation of the wicked and profligate, and all the occasions of evil which it ministers? Who that is conscious to himself of inclinations to intemperance, but will avoid the society of drunkards, and all occasions of riot and debauchery? And so in all other instances. A passion which appears to be laid asleep may be quickly awakened; and a very small spark, a very inconsiderable occasion, may enflame passions and make them ungovernable. For this reason, it must be always accounted a principal part of religious prudence, to avoid temptations, and all the occasions in which our integrity may suffer: Nor will any man maintain the purity of his heart, and the regularity of his passions, who neglects this rule. Yet how often are men seen to rush into snares, to act as if they were courting temptations, and wanted trials of their own strength? This will never fail of proving pernicious.

But

But where there is a strong natural propensity, or which has been acquired by habit, the greatest fortitude is necessary; and a constant attention to resist the workings of passion, and to bear it down. A great many familiar instances may be given of this; in the fearful, for example, or the passionate, or the proud, and ambitious. Where a particular passion has the ascendent in the constitution, it is always giving trouble; it does not need a juncture of circumstances to raise it to an enflamed degree, (as is the case with respect to those passions which have not such a natural ascendent) but exerts its power in a constant tendency, even when there are no remarkable provocations from present external objects. And as it is a great advantage for a man to know himself in this respect, what passions are predominant, and where he is most exposed; so here a constant watchfulness is required, the greatest fortitude, and hardiest resolution to bear them down.

And this, my brethren, brings us to the main thing in the business of keeping the heart. What are we called to watch over it for, and to observe all its workings, but

SERM. that we may oppose all its corrupt tendencies? Without this, our keeping the heart, so far as that means only looking into its motions, signifies just nothing. All that are really virtuous must know, from their own experience, that in this self-discipline the great labour of a virtuous life does indeed lie. Here are the internal conflicts and victories of virtuous resolution, and conscience; which are concealed from the world, but perfectly known to God, and highly pleasing to him. Decency of life and regularity of manners, so far at least as to be free from gross crimes, and public blame, are but a small thing when compared with that discipline and care, by which the heart is kept in a proper frame and temper, and the affections in a state of regularity. He is the man of worth, he only is truly so, who can hazard an appeal to the searcher of hearts, that he does not indulge any vicious affection within him, but makes it his constant business to purify the heart. He too is the happy person, and will enjoy the pleasures of virtue in the highest relishes of them, who knows in experience, that by the powers of conscience, and religion,

ligion, he has subdued all evil desires, and S E R M.
rejoices in a freedom from the bonds in XVI.
which it held him. When the wrathful
are become of a meek temper; the proud
and ambitious, humble; the worldly
minded, liberal in their dispositions, and
heavenly; this is the conquest which of
all others is the most glorious, and in
which the ingenuous find greatest satisfaction.

I have only to add farther, that the great duty recommended in my text must be understood to signify that we should watch over, and resist the first workings of passion, the conceptions of lust, as the apostle James terms them—*Lust when it hath conceived bringeth forth sin.* All men know the difference between the first motions of passion, and the strength it obtains by indulgence in the mind. Many of the passions are indeed like fire in this respect, that from a very small beginning they grow to a very great flame. I speak now of the workings of them upon particular occasions—*Behold how great a matter a little fire kindles!* The truth is, the first motions and excitations of passion, and desire, when the proper objects are presented,

SERMON. presented, seem not at all in our power,
 XVI. at the time; nor are they therefore at all
 culpable, more than the desire of eating,
 in him who is hungry. But when by un-
 due indulgence they become irregular,
 here is our fault; and when they are not
 so controlled as to prevent not only the
 commission of sin, but the subversion of the
 mind's tranquillity and composure. And
 it is known to every man from his own
 experience, that a little application on the
 first appearances of passion, would have
 been effectual to quell it; whereas, by in-
 dulgence it gathers such strength, as hardly
 to admit of any control. The great art is
 to resist the beginnings of evil; and then
 to apply the powers of reason and con-
 science, when passion is yet but weak,
 and beginning to work its pernicious ef-
 fects—to try if we cannot bear it down;
 to divert the mind from the object intirely,
 which if it can be done, will effectually
 answer the end; and which, upon some oc-
 casions, is known to be the only effectual
 means of answering it. This is all I shall
 say for explaining the duty of keeping our
 hearts, and so proceed to

The

in keeping the heart, &c.

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The second head of discourse, namely, SERM.
to lay before you the most effectual helps XVI.
for our doing this with success.

And here, in the first place, we are to turn our thoughts to our Creator. Frequent and serious contemplation of his perfections, and of the relation in which we stand to him, is undoubtedly the most effectual of all means, in forming the heart to goodness; indeed so effectual, that I will venture to say, no one has applied it diligently, without success. When once we have attained just apprehensions concerning God, that infinite universally present mind, who according to the rules of most perfect wisdom and goodness governs the universe; we are so made that we cannot possibly, with attention, survey this matchless excellence, without admiration and the utmost esteem. What can appear more glorious to the mind, than perfect wisdom, and perfect goodness, in eternal conjunction? Now, when we go on to consider this Being, as our Creator, that we are not only related to him as the creatures of his power, but the subjects of his moral government, and so constituted that we are capable of attaining
to

SERM. to a character which renders us amiable in
 XVI. his eye; and on the contrary, that we may
 so behave as to become the objects of his
 indignation; it is not possible that we should
 not desire his approbation, and to be in
 favour with him; even suppose we were
 to feel no painful apprehensions of suffer-
 ing by his anger, when a bad temper and
 conduct expose us to it.

Besides, there is in such greatness, pu-
 rity, and goodness, what strikes the mind
 with an ingenuous awe and fear of of-
 fending; an awe not servile, arising from
 the dread of punishment, but which is a
 most glorious and worthy affection, ob-
 taining most in the very best spirits: It is
 expressed in Scripture by *fearing the Lord,*
and his goodness: The meaning of which we
 shall best understand, when we reflect how
 we are affected in the presence of a person
 of distinguished worth, and conversing
 with him; with what care we avoid every
 thing that may be offensive to him; and
 to behave so, in our words and actions, as
 to be agreeable: And all this, not from
 any apprehension he would hurt us, should
 we act otherwise; but from a sense of the
 reverence due to such superior worth, and
 the

the disingenuity there must be in doing SERM.
any thing which is an indignity to it. XVI.

Now, if thus we reverence, and stand in awe of superior dignity, and worth, in our fellow creatures; how much more must this affection prevail in the minds of the ingenuous, when the great original infinite excellence is the object of it? What must any man, not quite abandoned, think of himself, when his conscience tells him that his course of life is set in opposition to, is a continued war with, the most perfect wisdom and most perfect love? That he is doing constant indignity to the greatest possible excellence, the greatest possible grace? But there is indeed an awe of another sort, which strikes the mind in the contemplation of God. He is our Lawgiver and Sovereign, he will bring us into judgment for the deeds we shall have done in the body; and as he will amply reward the righteous, so he will not fail to punish the workers of iniquity; and with what severity, who can tell?

All these things, it is true, may be known and believed by men, without making any good impressions on their minds, at least such as are lasting; but when men set themselves

SERM. themselves to think seriously, and call up-
 XVI. on their minds to give close attention,
 when they repeat these sentiments over
 and over in their thoughts, and give them
 scope enough there, it will be a very ex-
 traordinary thing if their hearts are not
 affected. A vivid sense of God upon the
 mind, will have powerful influence—I
have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear,
but now mine eye seeth thee: that is, I have
 quite another sense of thy greatness and
 perfection than before, *and I abhor myself,*
and repent in dust and ashes. If then we
 would endeavour to rectify what is amiss
 in the state of our affections, let us apply
 ourselves to this knowledge of God; and
 in this we shall learn virtue. To know
 him is life everlasting; to know him, so
 as to imitate his perfections. Let us then
 frequently, and with deep attention, con-
 template these perfections—Let us be in-
 stant in prayer and supplication to him—
 Let us think and act as always in his pre-
 sence; as having our inmost hearts con-
 stantly open to him. Surely to such ha-
 bits of pious meditation, and of prayer,
 vicious affections will at length give way;
 and dispositions that are good and worthy,
 will

will be strengthened by them. As reason SER M.
may convince the unpractised, and XV.
unexperienced, of the truth of this; so
experience best proves, to such as have
tried it, that nothing does so effectually
contribute to bring the mind into a proper
state, as the exercises of true piety. Nor
is it less certain, that negligence of God
is that which gives strength to corrupt
affections; and a loose to the mind, by
which it is laid open to all temptations,
and to all evil. This indeed is the more
to be taken notice of, that it seems to be
the great and growing distemper of the
present age; and surely a most threatening
one to the state of religion; which is
not likely to mend with us, till a greater
regard is shewn to the Being who made
us; until men apply, with more diligence,
to the exercises of piety and devotion;
which are not only, as you have seen, a
natural and proper means of suppressing
bad dispositions, and strengthening good
affections, but the appointed means of
our deriving light and life, from the fa-
thers of lights; and of procuring those as-
sistances which will prove effectual. *For*
if men that are evil know how to give good
gifts

SERM. gifts to their children, much more will our
 XVI. heavenly father give the Holy Spirit to them
 who ask him. Let us ask then, that we
 may receive; let us seek that we may
 find; let us knock that it may be opened
 to us.

The second thing I would recommend
 as a means of keeping the heart, is a vir-
 tuous industry. No one observation made
 upon human life, is more just, than that
 idleness is the mother of mischief. We
 are formed for action; and when the
 powers are not employed in something
 worthy, they are likely enough to find
 employment of another sort. To do just
 nothing, is painful, of which men soon
 become impatient. Accordingly, we see
 that when they are not called to labour,
 by the necessity of their circumstances,
 they are apt to find out diversions for
 themselves; many of which are not a
 little laborious, perhaps more so in some
 instances, than the toils of the poor in
 earning his daily bread. But when re-
 creations, however laborious, are quite
 innocent, men are safe in pursuing them,
 so far as is consistent with their perform-
 ing certain offices of life incumbent upon
 all,

all, in all circumstances. It is quite other-
wise when they give themselves up to di-
versions, which are either, in some re-
spects, really unlawful, or which have a
tendency to dissipate and corrupt the
mind; still much worse is it, when their
vacant hours are given to the pursuit of
vice. But what I am mainly to insist on,
is this, that if men are vacant from all
thought and employment worthy of them,
the mind thus quite unbended, as it will
contract a dislike to action, so it will lie
open to all temptations; and to keep it in a
proper temper will be found not only dif-
ficult, but indeed impracticable. When
temptations are offered, the more impetu-
ous, and turbulent passions, will immedi-
ately rage in the heart, and by habitual
indolence, the powers of resisting and con-
trolling them, will be found in a great mea-
sure extinguished.

When men are so given up to sloth,
that they have lost the inclination to all
other virtuous labours, much more will
they be impatient, and indeed, incapable
of that internal labour, which is necessa-
ry to restrain irregular lusts and passions;
and which of all things requires the great-

SERMON. est vigor and resolution. In a word, the
XVI. mind of the idle and slothful, as it lies
open to the inroads of temptation, and
the insults of impure tumultuous passions,
so it has lost that internal spring, that vi-
gour and activity, which is necessary to
give a successful resistance and opposition
to them. And, in reality, the powers of
the body, and of animal life, do not suffer
more by the habits of sloth and indolence,
than do the intellectual and moral
powers; indeed, by means of these, both
become good for little, both incapable of
answering the true ends of life. Every
one who has observed mankind, must have
seen this exemplified in so many instances,
that there can be no occasion for a more
particular illustration. The poor who are
obliged to daily labour for the sustenance
of life, are very apt to complain, to think
this a hard world, the administration we
are under a severe one, and to envy those
who, by the possession of a plentiful for-
tune, are placed above all such necessity.
But a serious view of human life, and the
state of the world, will satisfy us that
there is great wisdom, and great goodness
too, in appointing labour for the children
of

of men; it is rather a great blessing than S E R M.
a real evil. Happy had it been for many XVI.
who appear in all the pride of an ample
fortune, and in all the luxury which it
makes them capable of supporting; happy
had it been for them, if they had been o-
bliged to earn their bread with their own
hands! They would in that case have, in
all probability, been better men, and more
useful; they would have had no such guilt
to answer for, as they have now contract-
ed; and their labours might have been
some way serviceable to the world.

Let it therefore be recommended to us
to avoid habits of sloth, and indolence,
and vacancy of thought; to apply our-
selves to action, in such a measure as may
preserve the vigour and activity of the
mind, and an aptitude for the best exer-
cises. Few men can be at a loss to find
out employment for themselves, as most
are under a necessity of pursuing some
business in life, for their own subsistence,
and making provision for their offspring.
Diligence and activity in this business, is
no small virtue; indeed of great signifi-
cance; not only to the promoting a man's
temporal interest (*it is the hand of the di-*

SERM. *ligent which maketh rich*) but to the pre-
XVI. servation of innocence. A thousand snares
and temptations do the industrious escape,
to which the idle and slothful are exposed.
Moreover, as life passeth on safely, so it
is spent reputably, when men are with
honest industry serving their generation,
in the business of that station wherein
providence hath placed them. But sup-
pose men have the advantage of being, by
an opulent fortune, placed above all ne-
cessity of labour, are they therefore to be
idle? Are there no services to a country,
to a neighbourhood, to friends, in which
they may be virtuously employed? May
not the improvement of their minds, in
knowledge, find sufficient occupation for
them? In the study of themselves, of na-
ture around them, of the various state of
nations in this world, and in the transac-
tions of past ages, cannot they find busi-
ness both very entertaining, and very pro-
fitable? Could any mortal ever say that he
was forced to pass his time in perfect indo-
lence and inactivity, or that he could find
no employment for himself? No surely;
this can never be the case. It is not in
circumstances or station that the cause of
idleness

idleness is to be found, but in the temper: SER M.

And to set the indecency and absurdity of XVI.

such a life before us, so as to beget, in every good and generous mind, an utter abhorrence of it, there needs no more than a faithful history of it. A continued course of trifling, where the most important care is to murder time, where the most remarkable incidents of a man's life are his rising at one hour, and lying down at another, his sitting down to table at a third, and to gaming at a fourth; his appearing at places of public resort, as a part of the shew, or fauntering, from place to place, without any purpose to serve, but that of empty ceremony—Who that knows how to do justice to the dignity of human nature, can look into this without contempt and indignation? Surely the gifts of fortune were never given to men to make them less significant than others; but to make them more so; and when they are excused by the indulgence of providence from the labours of low life, in which others are obliged to toil, it becomes them to employ their time, and powers, in all the more generous services to mankind and themselves. When they

SERM. do not so, they become a nuisance ; and
 XVI. high station, and opulent fortune, become
 a snare and curse to them. To conclude,
 of all the means of preserving integrity
 and innocence, of keeping the heart in a
 proper state, virtuous industry in business
 of some kind or other, is perhaps to be ac-
 counted the principal ; as on the other
 hand, nothing can be more pernicious than
 sloth and idleness.

Thirdly, we see that all men have a
 circle, lesser or greater, of acquaintances,
 with whom they principally converse :
 Some of them, those with whom they are
 joined as members of domestic society ;
 others, whom the business and commerce
 of life, or near neighbourhood, render fa-
 miliar to them. Now, it is of very great im-
 portance that men choose such to be their
 intimate familiar acquaintances, as have a
 right temper, and a just taste in life ; that
 their daily conversation may be such as will
 not only not endanger innocence and virtue,
 but contribute to the guarding and strength-
 ening of them. There is a mighty power
 in conversation, in the behaviour of our
 familiar acquaintances, (especially if they
 are high in our esteem) to affect the mind,
 and

and to render us like them in temper. SERM.

And indeed all social intercourse has influence one way or other; either in laying temptations and snares in our way, by such licentiousness as defiles the imagination; or by such a contrary strain, as tends to the encouragement of virtue; very rarely shall we find conversation so perfectly indifferent, but that it shall have a tendency to make the heart either better or worse. Surely a wise and good man will choose such for his familiars and intimates, as are like to mend and improve his temper, rather than to corrupt him. And it must be very grateful to a person of real worth, when he mixes in company and conversation, to be secure that he shall hear nothing tending to endanger his virtue, or hurt the temper of his mind; so that if conversation should not be improving, it will at least be innocent. Whosoever then would maintain his integrity and a right temper, must avoid the infectious breath of wicked company. It is true that with respect to certain relations in life, men have no opportunity of making a choice; but must be content with such as befall them: However, with respect to the circle

SERM. cle of our voluntary familiar associates,
XVI. the case is otherwise: in the choice of
these, wisdom and virtue will shew themselves: Nor can any man be looked upon as a man of worth himself, who chooseth to herd with the worthless and wicked. There is a licentiousness and impurity in the conversation of such, which is extremely offensive to men of confirmed virtue; and to such as are not so, extremely dangerous; especially to the young, and unthinking, and unpractised in the world. No misfortune can be as great, as their falling into the hands of the profligate and abandoned. Many unhappy creatures who, if left to themselves, would have proceeded successfully, yet, for want of firmness and resolution, have been ruined by the arts of those deceivers, who seem to pique themselves upon the destruction of youthful innocence, and glory in making it their prey—A spirit, of all others, the most diabolical; and who can say what such miscreants deserve? No acts of robbery, nay allow me to add, of murder, are so execrable as the ruining of innocence; in truth, men who set themselves, studiously and industriously, to this, are the
the

the greatest pests in human society. I have S E R M.
only to add under this head, that as XVI.
men of good hearts, and who would make
it their business to keep them so, will
surely choose that company, in which their
virtue and the purity of their taste are
not like to suffer, but to be confirmed ra-
ther; so it is one of the best and wor-
thiest offices we can do to one another,
to encourage that strain of conversation,
which may be to the use of edifying; and
which, as the apostle speaks, may *minister*
grace to the hearers. This is a matter
which seems too much to be neglected.
There is indeed an extreme that we ought
carefully to avoid, namely, the obtruding
discourses upon grave subjects, on every
occasion, whether proper or not; which
instead of doing good, only makes men
ridiculous; but yet there are ways of
dropping incidental hints, and of leading
to subjects which may be useful, that are
in no sort affected, and will not prove
offensive. A person who has just and
manly notions of virtue and religion, with
but common discretion, will run no dan-
ger of erring in these points. But the
mention of this is enough.

Lastly,

SERM. Lastly, conversing much with the heart,
XVI. observing the tendencies of the affections
with care, and endeavouring to preserve
always a just sense of things upon the
mind, will be found of the greatest use.
Lusts and evil affections bias the mind ;
they cast mists and darkness over it ; and
the very source of them lies in want of
sense and discernment. To acquire which,
and so to preserve, in the heart, *the candle*
of the Lord, unclouded, nothing in our
power can contribute so much, as fre-
quent and serious communing with our
own hearts—Taking the tendency of our
desires and inclinations to task, with se-
verity ; and examining the pretences un-
der which the various gratifications of
them are recommended. By such a care-
ful attention to ourselves we will find out
the *deceitfulness of sin* ; and those snares
which prejudice conceals from the un-
thinking ; we shall be able to resist temp-
tations with firmness and resolution ; for
in truth, the success of them, where they
do prevail, is in a great measure owing
to carelessness and inattention.

I shall, in conclusion, very briefly re-
present to you the argument, by which
the

the preacher recommends to us the diligent keeping of our hearts; namely, that *out of them are the issues of life.* In a former discourse I shewed you how out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, falsewitness, blasphemies; and the heart which is the source of these, is indeed the source of death: For wickedness, and misery, are connected in the nature of things, as well as by the positive constitution of God, who will judge mankind according to their works, and has prepared tribulation, and anguish, for every soul of man who doth evil, without any respect of persons. On the other hand, the heart which is full of love to God, and good affections, which is pure from vicious inclination, is a spring of the most lasting and satisfying happiness. The good affections, naturally and necessarily, produce pleasure and peace; they are indeed, when in proper strength, the fairest internal paradise. Besides, as they are pleasing to God, so he has promised to reward them; *the pure in heart shall be blessed, for they shall see God!* This is life, this is happiness, in the highest and strongest sense of

SERM.

XVI.

SERM. of that word! Infinite then shall our gain
XVI. be, in keeping the heart with diligence
and success; and if we are conscious to
ourselves of the one, we may most as-
suredly promise ourselves the other.

End of Vol. II.

